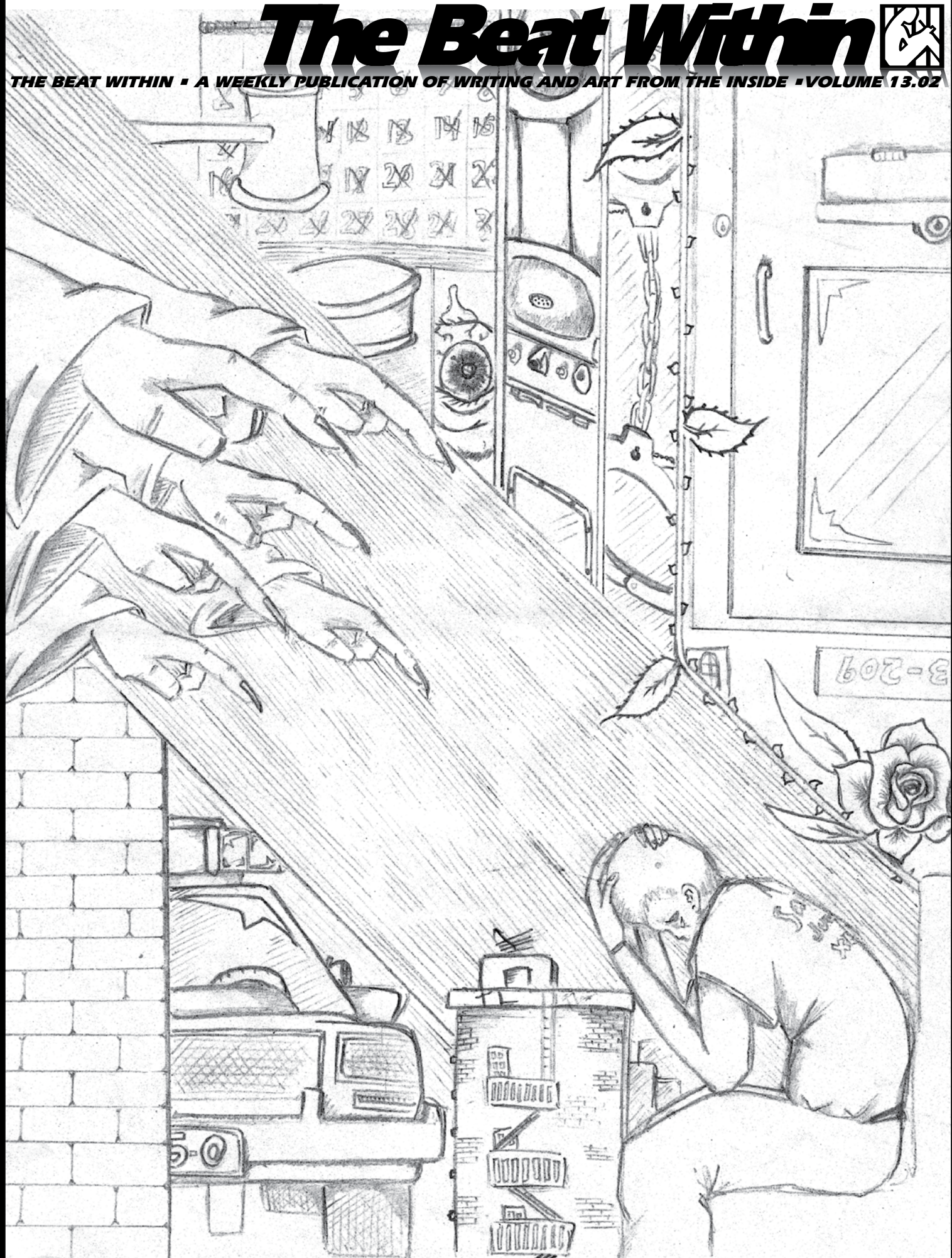


The Beat Within



THE BEAT WITHIN • A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF WRITING AND ART FROM THE INSIDE • VOLUME 13.02



Hello Beat editorial note readers, how's the world treating you? How's your neighbor treating you? How are you treating yourself? Hope this new year is starting off on a positive note for you, or at least better than yesterday?

We the writers of the editorial note are always curious who in their right mind is reading this note, and what do you hope to learn from the spillage on this page? Hey, don't get us wrong, we appreciate you readers stopping by, and we wish more would join you, but then again, we have no idea who you are. We the curious editor's note wonders if you are reading this in your cell? Are you reading this note in the rec room, or are you fortunate enough to be reading this from the internet and the comforts of home or at the office? Are you an old school Beat reader, or brand spankin' new to this Beat world? If you have a moment drop us a note via snail mail or email and let us know you are out there, we'd love to hear from you. We'd also love for you to write this editor's note too. So come at us with 700 to 1000 words of insight that can be embraced by all. Tell us it's a future editorial note and we'll feature you in an upcoming issue on this page! Yes indeed, we'll give you this soapbox to stand on too. You wonder why we are doing this, well, because the editor's note is getting harder and harder to write each week. We are finding ourselves short on time each week, so if you want to help us out in a big time way, get busy writing an editor's note! If we receive a few, then we'll get you all in each week, one issue and written piece at a time.

Well it's 2008, can you believe it? Yeah, we are kicking off the second issue of our thirteenth season as a weekly. Wild! We hope you enjoy this latest read too. It's what we veteran readers and editors have come to expect, hard-hitting in your face writing from the inside, from predominantly juvenile halls around the San Francisco Bay Area, as well as awesome writings from our good friends in Bernalillo County in the great state of New Mexico. Plus, we have a host of contributions in The BWO (Beat Without), contributions from all over the United States of America!! We suppose you can call us a national publication eager to really breakout.

It's hard to imagine how many young and old people we have touched over the years. It's hard to imagine the number of young people who have participated in our weekly workshops. It's uncountable now to guess how many letters we have received over the years. And to think of how many of you wrote deep pieces, pieces that blew our minds, touched our hearts and made us cry, to pieces unprintable, to pure nonsense, to pieces right on the edge, where we would stew in our thoughts if we should print this or not. The criteria; is this a piece we would stand behind and put the program in possible jeopardy over?

It's uncountable right not to guesstimate how many of you have been published? We wish we could present accurate numbers, but one day we'll come up with an approximate number or close to it, for the hell of it. Today, we have an amazing library of Beats, and a number of them are easily accessible through our website too! It's a shame we were ripped off a few years back, and what was stolen was The Beat's hard-drive, with years of Beats, that we never copied, figuring that we wouldn't get our equipment ripped off.

Still, we have so much writing and art that is showcased for all one week, and forever gone the next, unless we bring old Beats to a speaking engagement, or you collectors share with the next friend or stranger. As the saying goes, another week another Beat, and that's been our motto since day one.

This is the year, we hope to find a publisher who is

interested in The Beat book. We want to put out, not simple a best of, but a retrospective of our work over the years. The exciting thing to share with you few is that the project is in its initial stages, and we have a colleague combing through The Beats of yesterday, helping us find the right pieces for our book. We also have a well known graphic designer who is designing our book, and is doing so from the kindness of her heart. We know this project is immense, we also know how exciting it is going to be to create such a project that will probably touch more lives than we could ever imagine. It's an exciting time, it's also a busy time with so much work to do. We suppose we are fortunate that we have such a job that is as relentless as this, but, who would have ever imagine we'd be doing this work with such a small staff? We think back to the glory days when we were rich with Beat colleagues, now look at us, or should we say, look at our masthead. You better believe we'll share more with you editorial note readers in the coming weeks when the mission becomes a bit more clearer to us all.

All right, our time is almost up, so lets get busy with sharing the topics with you all. By the way, if you are moved by the topics you read here and want to write on them, please do so! Ok, our first topic is, the very popular, "What Makes You Smile?" - No matter where you're at, or who you're with, or what your doing there is always room for a smile. Tell us about that someone who makes you smile? Tell us about something you have done that makes you smile. Does smiling make you feel better? When? What have you done to make other people smile? Or, what about when you have you smiled at the wrong time? Good or bad, smiles can be contagious, from someone who smiles at you and you smile back, to when you hear a favorite old song on the radio, to smiling when there is nothing to smile about? Let us know in detail what puts a smile on your face. Or tell us of a time you smiled when it was all bad.

Our second topic, "The anti-drug" - We often read in The Beat Within how many of you love to drink and smoke and how you can't wait to get out and do it all over again. This week we want to read from you about what healthy addictions you have that actually make you feel good. Tell us what you enjoy doing that isn't dangerous to your health or well-being. Is it getting on the computer? Is it reading/writing? Dancing? Collecting CDs? Being a rapper? Watching TV? Going to movies? Tell us about you outside of the drug and alcohol culture that has already clouded your future. We know there's more to you than that, so break down your dreams, loves and how these healthy addictions have become a part of you.

Last topic, "Food Critic" - Food plays such an important part in our lives. We know many of you are missing your favorite foods, so this week we want to hear about the foods that have a place in your stomach. If you could have any food right now what would you eat? When you get out of jail, what restaurant is a must and what will you order? What food(s) needs to be included on the juvenile hall menu? Tell us the importance of food. Tell us what restaurants we need to go to in your neighborhood to get the best Chinese, best Mexican, best Indian, best Italian, and best American. Tell us what you like to cook. What about mama's home cooking? This is our food topic, so get busy making us readers hungry!

With that said, readers, it's time to go, so we'll leave you with our good thoughts, shoot we all need someone to send us a good vibe, so this one goes out to you amazing writers who we are featuring in this week's Beat. Don't forget to drop us a line and let us know you're out there! With respect...

The Beat Within, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

To our writers: What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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Art: Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

Spiritual Advisor: Jack Jacqua

Special Volunteer: Nancy DeMartini

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www.thebeatwithin.org

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Was It Worth It?

Hell no it wasn't worth it.
 I'm in this unit waking up in this cell that keeps me
 confined all day long.
 In this jail that forbids me to touch, play and laugh with
 my daughter.
 In these draws that half of the youth in this county have
 worn.
 Listening to these staff that don't think a thought about
 me when their shift is over.
 This food. This god dang food, where do they even get it?
 My mom. I can't even hug, kiss, talk to my mom
 whenever I want!
 My baby's mom, she's crying every night 'cause I decided
 to have some punk ass fun
 in a stolen Camary for a few hours,
 so now I can' hold her when she's had a bad day and let
 her know it's OK.
 My lil' brothers are out there laughing at me dumb and
 nor taking serious no more.
 I hate this jail.
 I'm gonna miss out on so much while I'm in here.
 X-mas, Valentines day and my own birthday. My 18th
 birthday!
 You only get one of those in your life and I'm spending
 mine in a jail cell.
 I miss my daughter so much and her momma so much
 and my momma so much,
 my brothers, I miss them so much, my own food, my
 own draws.
 My freedom I miss it so much.
 When I think about what I did and my consequences for
 it, was it worth it, hell naw.

-Phat Boi, Santa Clara

From The Beat: So then, what to do right? What does it take to spend the next birthday and all future birthdays (of yours and your loved ones) free? That's the million dollar question, right?

Life

Human life is like
 forced army service,
 like a life of hard work,
 like a homeless man
 longing for place to sleep,
 like a worker waiting to be paid.
 Month after month,
 I have nothing to live for.
 Night after night
 brings me grief.
 When I lie down to sleep,
 the hours drag,
 I toss all-night and long for dawn.
 My body is full of worms,
 it is covered with sores.
 My days pass by
 without hope,
 pass faster then a second.
 Remember: my life
 is only a breath,
 my happiness already ended
 You see me now
 but never again.
 If you look for me
 I will be gone

- Nagra, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Nagra, we miss you and are sad that we didn't get to hear more of your story. This enigmatic poem shows that you have lots to say. Beautiful writing.

Smiles

There are many things that make me smile in my life.
 I love waking up in the morning at home,
 opening the blinds, and the sun coming through the
 window.

I enjoy peaceful mornings with people I care about.

That's what makes me smile.

I also like the feeling of going to school and working and
 knowing my life is a truth.

That thought puts a smile on my face.

Personally, the older I get, I notice that the simpler
 things make me smile.

I don't need a million things to put a smile on my face.

I wake up every morning smiling because I know I am
 great, and cared about,

and I'm doing my hardest to become a good person,

-Rosita, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Try your hardest and it will happen. And it sounds like you have your priorities straight. But of course, intentions must be followed by actions. We wish you the best.

No More Chances

Well, today I would like to share with you young readers about this experience that I'm presently going through. On August 30, 2007, I got arrested and charged with assault with a deadly weapon on a peace officer, three hit and runs, one possession of stolen property, reckless driving, reckless endangerment, and being under the influence of a controlled substance. These charges all happened in less than an hour.

And while I was incarcerated, I got three more stolen vehicle charges. Now, I am facing adult court at 17, and on my 18th birthday, they are shipping me off to county.

I just wanted to say to all those young kids that get second and third chances to get out and rehabilitate yourselves, I envy you because my adult life is just going to begin and already it's messed up. I see all these kids get released and come right back. I've only been in trouble one other time. They ain't giving me no chances. So, do right by your chance - don't take advantage of it.

- Lil' Sapita, Santa Clara

From The Beat: So, after all this time we finally get the full story! Thanks for sharing your wisdom and giving good advice to all those bouncing in and out of here. Second chances are not to be taken lightly - you seemed to have learned this well.

Revolving Door

My life is like a revolving door, always coming in and going out of jail. I put on my mask to go out and rob, knowing it's wrong - but the drug takes over.

People look into my eyes. They see a kid crying for help.

My hate for my dad has stained my life. I need to let it go. I need to give him another chance. Every morning I look into the mirror, hating what I've become. I've made so many mistakes. People are already thinking my life is wasted, that I'm headed for state prison. But my head is still up. I need someone to guide me through these gates. I need to start my life over.

-Kevin, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: Nobody gets to do that. We do get the next best thing, sometimes. We get a chance to stop doing the things that messed us up. So, we can restart our lives by stopping the bad behavior. Sounds like drugs play a role in your bad behavior. That means having the courage to get help with your drug problem. That's probably just one of several things you need to do. So, Kevin, make a list. Identify what you need to fix. Make another list of possible ways to fix those problems. Expect that it will take a lot of determination and hard work. But bit by bit you will build faith in yourself. And you will change your life.

Sometime

Hook:

Sometime I feel like my mamma don't love me
Sometime I feel like my family won't look at me anymore
Sometime I feel like God can't hear me
Sometime I feel like the devil won't leave me alone

Verse 1:

Sometime I feel like I'm trapped inside a lil' box
Like my body can't swim
Drowning down the ocean water
I'm ended up in a dream
I can't escape
Sometime I feel like I'm drifting away
When I'm running away
I feel disappointed at life
Like I keep on gettin' the same number on the dice
When my mom came at me wrong
I feel disrespected
'Cause like I'm the enemy
When I'm the one that's protecting her
When I look at my family
Dead in the eye
I realize and see anger and pain inside
But seeing that anger makes me mad
So I try to pray and hope God hear my prayer
Then
(2xs) I be trippin'
I didn't know I be trippin'
I got a lot of cases and I be slippin'

Hooks:

Verse 2:

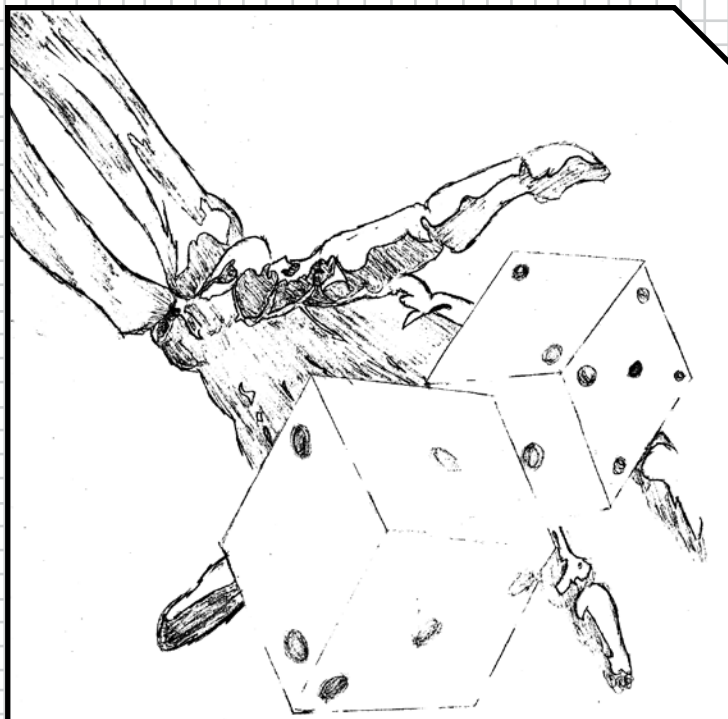
Sometime I feel like crying
I ain't ashamed to say it
I got As and Bs on my transcript
Thank God I made it
Sometime I reel like bein' alone

That's one of the reasons I'm not home
Because every time I leave
Police come looking for me
I almost died once
But got a second chance
So I pray every day
That I'm thankful to be on this land
I believe in God
Yep, on the real, dude
People look at me crazy
So I say
"What that got to do with you?"
I remember those days
When I didn't like to fight
But who does like to fight?
Nowadays fighting tight
I'm not trying to be soft
But if I am
What you gon' do?
'Cause I then seen and been through
Way more den you
I know about livin' on your own
I was thirteen
When I started
I know about bein' alone
Even more den you
I know about bein' alone
Even in your home
It's violence
I sometime wish I could start over
I'm gon' make it better

So the drama is folded

-Lil' Obei

From The Beat: Beautiful, sad song/poem. It can be really shocking and scary when you realize that your mother sometimes doesn't love you unconditionally, like you may have been used to or maybe you think she should. To realize that she has a life of her own, regardless of you. Since your mother, as you write, came at you wrong, maybe she misunderstood your situation. Can you explain to her what really was going down? Is there anywhere in your home where you can be all alone, so you won't have to leave to get some privacy, safety, security? When the police come to your home, is that on you? What are you doing that brings them to your house?



Lots Makes Me Smile

A lot of things make me smile; my family, my homeboys who are like my family, my dog, people with compassion and love make me smile, people who smile make me smile! Then again, what I really need to learn is to teach myself to smile. I need to transform my thoughts into thoughts of love and happiness. Because isn't it true that being happy is healthy?

Thoughts are so powerful. Thoughts lead you everywhere, they can lead you into being a teacher, a leader, the president, a pupil, a killer, a lover, a pedophile, or into death.

It can lead you to many things. But I'm getting off topic. I need to transform all my negative thoughts into positive ones to make me smile. What's the point of having negative thoughts? Negative thoughts make your life a miserable life. You choose how to live life. I heard someone say before that you shouldn't be scared of death but to be scared of how you live your life. So I might as well learn how to smile. Plus, I want to make people smile because smiles are contagious, right?

-Viet Tiger, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Yeah you're right! No matter how bad your situation is, there's always something to smile about. No matter what hole you're in, it's up to you to crawl out of it, and learn a lesson from your experience. You do need to smile! Why waste your time being mad or trying to look hard. You gotta start thinking positive and act positive 'cause only you can do that. It's up to you if you wanna smile or cry about it. With that said, we think we know which route you're taking.

It's Hard

I was reading my Bible I tell me how to live
That's hard to do when kids killing kids
I'm sorry for the mommas that cried
I keep so much pain inside
But never do I start to cry
It felt like my heart dropped when I heard Kev and Jesse
Died
They was close friends to me but other people
See it as another homicide
I'm glad I'm in here if I was out I would be down to ride
But they say everything happens for a reason
We don't have summer in Oakland you should call it
Murder season
I just look at the trees and wish I could fly away
And if I got a chance to talk to Jesse and Kev I would say
"Y'all angels now I miss y'all so much"
I remember we use to act like we couldn't be touched
I know the people probably laugh at me
I don't know one person in the inside that's sad like me
I'm experimenting so you may find me
Where the lab might be
Jesse and Kev just know that I love you
Lil' Rob I know you up there too.

-Young Mari, Alameda

From The Beat: It's hard. Life is very hard, especially when so many of your peers are dying. Why are kids killing kids? What makes people think they have a right to take someone's life? Is there any way that you can think of to decrease the violence in your communities? We need to educate the youngstas. Kids killing kids don't sound right.

Smiling My Anti-Drug

I used to have a bad temper
Sold drugs, hurt people, an ex-gang member
I didn't listen to anything or anybody
I knew the things I was doing were wrong but
Nobody could stop me
I did things for no reason, out of anger, or to
Just prove a point
Now I realize why I'm looking at so much time
In the joint
Things have changed now, I've changed
And people started to notice
That's what makes me smile
I didn't think I could do it
But I knew I had to be patient, it would take a lil' while
Now
Instead of anger and bad choices, I have the power
Of a million voices
I get pats on the back and now a lot of support
Negativity was my obsession but change is my new sport
I smile
Because I changed, I smile because I'm doing
Things I thought I couldn't do, I smile because
My dream has finally come true
I came a long way
From negative things since I was a child.
All I accomplished, I'm in jail
But all is good in my life
So I really have no choice but to smile.

- Reggie, Land Of Enchantment

From The Beat: You said, "change is my new sport" and we applaud you for that. We hope that you remain in that positive state of mind because doors will open for you. We look forward to your writing.

Reality

Sometimes I just wonder what life would be like,
if I allowed the rules. 'Cause now I got two strikes,
seventeen-years-old, most of my friends are dead, doing
time or the drugs got to they head
Everything happens for a reason, that's what I was told
Play ya' cards right, you'll grow up to be old
My ways of life were cold, posting up on the blocks
Smoking Newports, hand on my glock
Just waiting and waiting the violence don't stop
Tryna get some money fast and stay away from cops
But now I think about the deaths, robberies and auto
thefts
All for what? Be alone hittin' sets
In a little ass room, I'd rather be having sex
Going to school and come through wit' a Lex'
But it's a lighter in the rain
Tryna run but I'm chained
Stuck in this life or what we call the game
When you rollin' them dice the result comes the same
It's another thing I was told
But my head was hard
Riding on the boulevard
Got pulled over found thangs in the car
I never learned my lesson
Playing wit my Smith and Wesson,
Now I'm stuck in max mad and hella stressing,
But that's reality for you....

-Angelo, Alameda

From The Beat: To take your own excellent line about the lighter in the rain. It's not enough to light the lighter, right, you need to find that corner outside the rain, and then you've got to have better fuel - sticks, books, paper, something that the lighter can catch up to, something stronger than the rain. You're in a shelter right now, thought it doesn't feel like one... and you need to figure out: What's my fuel? Is it knowledge? Is it education? Is it my own will? Is it the desire to live on and tell the world all the things my loved ones and I have been through? You could become a fire that makes this world take notice. But, yeah, one little lighter won't do it.

It's My Feelings

It's rage in my heart, and this ninja acting hard
Do I turn around and walk or do I let my gun spark

If I don't deal with him now I might be labeled as a mark
But if I take his life now, it'll just raise the murder chart

He already said he don't fight no more
And if he get to that banger, my life I won't have no more

It's witness all around so if I kill him I'm going down
But if I let this ninja live then fa' sho' I lose my crown

This is how it is everyday in the town
Everybody and they momma wanna prove they get down

Everybody wants to go dumb and dance like a retard
Being a killer is easy but getting an education is what's
really hard.

Who ever will shoot but fight to me is a straight up mark
How can you be a sucka just because you show that you
are smart?

I'm convinced that I'm gonna make it to the highly
educated chart
I changed my life around but you best believe I still got
heart.

-Anthony, Alameda

From The Beat: As you show in this poem, it's so crazy out there, that the thing needing the most heart is showing that courage to walk away. And great job breaking down the stress of a street confrontation.. a damned if you do/damned if you don't situation, that leads to death or incarceration/or your name sounded off in on a local TV station, we hope you walk out and get that education/because people like you are what could save the nation.

What Makes Me Smile

Hey Beat, what's good? I'm just here sittin' up in unit 2 chillin', writin' about what makes me smile. I've been in and out of juvenile hall, and no matter what, I gotta to smile. I don't know what it is. I guess I'm just a humorous person.

I'm a peaceful person, I ain't gonna lie. People get me mad, but then I take a deep breath, relax and think about all the things in life that make me happy, and I have no choice but to smile.

What makes me smile the most is my family because without them, I wouldn't be the person I am today.

-GG, San Francisco

From The Beat: You have such a bright outlook, does it help you when you're locked up? We hope you can figure out a way to stay out of here so that everybody can appreciate your smile!

It's Sad

When I was out, I was hot

They found Tuma dead in her car in Albertson's parking lot

And she still had the needle in her arm

This image alone had me torn and scorned

My favorite cousin had to die like that

At the funeral I didn't mean to cry like that

And rob why didn't you just give it up

It wasn't worth all this stuff

Your daughters and yo' baby mamas miss you

Dad broke down at the funeral he hugged and he kissed you

And Kev why did you have to open the door

When he didn't say nothing you shoulda knew he was there

to even the score

Dab I miss you for real

So I'ma tell you just how I feel

Why did you try to stunt like that

Why did you hang out the window it wasn't suppose to go

like that

Fell out the scraper head first and it's sad to say

They kept going going and left you on the freeway

And Mike why didn't you come in the house

They shot you four times in the back

All over who sells the most crack

Hodari why did it have to happen like this

Don't worry bout that problem it's fixed

Just to tell you we was banged up at the funeral

In case anything looked unusual

Ketta Bo she cried it broke her heart man

Yo' son look just like you

I remember when it was going down

I didn't feel safe you said my ninja its gone be okay

And uncle B I know you mad as hell

You did 25 years and then 15 more and you still in jail

From 17 all the way to 53

I respect that Uncle B you a gee

And Irma Dean granny know that I love you

You got off that crack

Cause my Grandpa Roger stress you my lil' brother

He getting older

You know my momma been crazy and she raised some

soldiers

I'ma let this street life go cause I'm getting older

Lil' Rob the Third, this stuff is crazy, your daddy in jail

They think he killed you his only little baby,

G went to Oregon and yo' grandpa went crazy.

-Young Mari, Alameda

From The Beat: Sometimes people don't know man. They could've done this they should've done that, but in the end shhh happens. Fate works in mysterious ways. But death is a part of life. We have to learn to live with it. That doesn't mean that we have to go looking for it either. We have to stay strong for those who have passed and live a beautiful life for them. Honor them in that way, like you start to do at the end of this poem.

Nobody Can Replace My Mom

Have you ever had everything you wanted, but inside your heart you feel empty? That's how I felt about group home.

I miss the love coming from my mom. I had everything such as clothes and shelter but I felt that group home wasn't for me. I missed the touch from my mom. She was caring for me.

The staff couldn't give that to me. Their job was to watch us. And then they go home. So I was not really close to the staff. Half the time, some don't even care. Some just worry about getting paid. From then on, I knew that the system wasn't fair.

One time at a group home, we had to vote just so we can go to the library. I was disappointed 'cause I didn't want to. I was pissed 'cause I was tired of being bored at the ranch.

I miss my freedom. At group homes they limit your freedom. That's why my heart felt empty. I miss my mom taking me on outings. Such as taking me to a park or just hanging out with each other. She was always making me smile. And nobody can replace my mom.

-Carlito, Alameda

From The Beat: Thank you for sharing your reflections on your group home experience with The Beat. Your piece gave us lots to think about. It's true that group homes can't replace true love and caring, and they aren't always fair 100% of the time either, even though there are a lot of dedicated staff that try to make it a fair and respectful environment. If you were in charge of running a group home, what changes would you make? We wish the best for you and your lovely mom.

*at a group home, we
had to vote just so we
can go to the library*

Hope

Three walls

One door with one clear window

Me on the inside

Time and opportunity on the outside

Two things that the hall you

Get a lot of or not to many of

All the money in the world couldn't

Buy back the time that's past me by

In the hall. All the good shhh done

In my life couldn't earn back

The opportunity wasted.

The only light that shines is

Comin' through that window,

So for the time being let that sun shine

...as bright as possible.

So I can hope

-Marcus, Alameda

From The Beat: The light in this poem comes from you, from the part of you that refuses to give up on hope, or let himself get swallowed by the darkness. If you keep that light shining, you will see that you have the strength to make your hopes come true!

Dear Beat

What's up Beat? This will be my last time writing in The Beat Within because I get out of here the day after tomorrow (Thursday). I am going to ROP (Rites Of Passage) in Nevada. I hear it is a very hard and difficult program but I think I can do it. I have to be there 9-18 months, depending on my behavior is when I get out. So when I get there I'm going to give more effort than needed, and start of my first day on a good note, and my last day will be good and so will all of those in between.

The courts tell me that if I do not graduate from this program, I go to CYA. This is why I will try my hardest to put out effort, follow directions, and be respectful to all those around me. I don't have time to gang bang in my life, which is why I stopped, and I've already started getting my tattoo' removed, because gangbanging has destroyed my life since day one.

I started when I was a young teen, I'm now fifteen turning sixteen in February. I've been to jail five times and now I have my very last chance at life, and I'm going to take advantage of this chance because I do not want to go to CYA.

Just so The Beat knows, I will be writing Dave when I get there to let him know how my life turns out. I've spent these last five months in jail talking to Dave and I'm writing

in a lot of Beat Within's. Dave has giving me the address to The Beat Within and tells me that I can receive articles at home, and I will look forward to reading the Beats.

I don't know how often I will be writing The Beat, because I will have a lot of things to take care of and I have over 20 different people to write and I don't think I will be writing The Beat once I get out of ROP because I will be doing my own thing and won't really be thinking of The Beat. But I do appreciate all The Beat Within staff and volunteers for taking time out of their day to come to jail and type the whole Beat Within for free.

At least you (The Beat Within) know that at least one person appreciates every thing you guys have done. But I will be trying my very hardest to do right in life, and I am willing to do whatever it takes to make my life better. The next time The Beat Within hears from me or Beat readers, will be about two months from now. So just know that I am trying my hardest to become successful in life and I will not be giving up. Stay safe and stay strong.

-Convict, Alameda

From The Beat: We appreciate all the comments you made about The Beat Within, and your incredible loyalty to yourself during these last months, We sure hope this continues at ROP and that you will keep your word and keep us posted when you can. This is why we do this kind of work so we can help young people, like yourself realize what they really want to do in life and that there is more to life than the lifestyle that brings you to jail. We appreciate your feedback, it really lets us know that we're touching lives. We wish you luck on your quest to get your life straight and look forward to hearing from you.

I've already started getting my tattoo' removed, because gangbanging has destroyed my life since day one.

Cat Chase Mouse

Sometimes I'm not myself, I can be another person
Get it the first time without rehearsing
I think about my life I know I made mistakes
There's nobody in this world that can take my place
I'm a dog but I don't see black and white
I see green because I'm about the almighty dollar
That's why when you got money you got friends
When you broke you ain't got nothing
Your so-called friends won't ever let you hit the 'Tussin'
If money could bring people back I would cash out
Don't throw sticks and stones cause I live in a glass house
This life in the streets is like cat chase mouse
The police are the cats and we are the mouse
We run hide jump for cover when the cat come
Except these cats got batons and guns
And two cans of mace
That's why when the cat sees us we high speed chase
These words I don't say them for nothing
Its a lot of nothings in the world I'm gone be something.

-Young Mari, Alameda

From The Beat: Excellent writing! Good description on how the Cat and mouse relate to you and your experiences with the police. Why do you think all your experiences with the police could be related to a game of cat and mouse? Do you provoke the chase at all? Why do you feel like they always wanna chase you? Are you doing anything that'll make the police wanna chase you? Think about it. You can be a smart mouse. Why do you wanna keep playing this game of cat and mouse from the police? You're never gonna win.

Never Felt So Alone

It was just yesterday we was layin' in each others arms
Just the otha day I felt no harm
Now I'm sittin' in this room so alone
Wit' you not
Being here, I'm all on my own,
I miss you so much I can't wait till I come home
And when I do I'm getting my grown man on
Something that I can't do wrong
But I miss her so much I mean real tough
Feel like shhh I wanna do for her ain't gone be enough
So I'm sitting here thinking about what's what
Going bad on staff 'cause they don't give a ...
Coming back here feel like I got shot in the gut
Then that would be my luck
I'm still a sitting duck
And she ain't just my new girl
I feel like she could be my whole world
Bra' I think I love this girl now I'm stressing ova
If she got a smile on her face day in day out
She did when I'm round
But who knows now that I'm on lockdown
All I want is to lay in her lap now
Happy Birthday to my lil' Riah Baby.

-Lil' Solid, Alameda

From The Beat: This just kind of fits with what we wrote on your last piece. You have a heart that was made to do right, it goes against you to do wrong. We hope you think on that during this time that you now have to think.

Prisoner

These doors won't open up to let me go.
 I wish my time would flow away, like a river.
 My name here is like a shadow that won't vanish.

Rumors won't hurt me.

I put up with them like putting on a mask.

When I look at my reflection in the mirror

I see stains in my eyes.

I am so impatient to become a prisoner of freedom.

- Buddha, Santa Cruz

From The Beat: "a prisoner of freedom" - that's a well-turned phrase Mr. Buddha. You have given yourself a name with a great history. That fellow they call Buddha was a very smart guy. He knew what makes us tick. He knew what makes us suffer. He said that everyone who has ever been alive has had to suffer, but that there are ways to learn to suffer less and be happier more. He was so smart about life that some people imagined he was a god. He said they were wrong. He said that he was simply "awake". And by being awake, he meant that he paid careful attention to what was going on. And that, pretty much, was what allowed him to understand human nature so well. That sounds like pretty good advice to us. Stay awake. Pay attention. Think before you act.

So Much Makes Me Smile

Let's see what makes me smile...

One thing that makes me smile is when I'm free

I smile when I'm around my family and loved ones

I smile every time I see or hear something funny

I smile sometimes when I try to hide my anger

I smile sometimes when I try to hide my fear

I smile sometimes when I see someone get hurt

I smile sometimes when I see a woman give birth to a child

I smile when I'm in court when there's nothing funny

I smile when I see money coming into my hands

I smile every time I buy a car off the lot

I smile every time I buy one of my ladies something

I smile when I do something good for the community

I smile when I break the law

I smile just to smile

I smile at the female counselors

I smile when I reach Step 4

But last but not least, I will smile the biggest smile

When I get released from these locked doors

-G, San Francisco

From The Beat: We want to thank you for taking this question seriously and writing more than the usual two sentences about how family makes you smile. You've given us a wonderful list of things that make you smile, though we have to wonder why seeing someone getting hurt would make you smile... If we were to ask what makes you cry, what would your list look like?

The Anti-Drug

For five years I was addicted to cocaine

It made me go insane

No one understood my pain

I hated everyone

I was always on the run

I finally quit when I found out I was pregnant with my son

Now I'm drug-free

And I have never felt so happy

I've been through a lot of crap

And I never thought I would quit

And now that I know what to do

I'm going to start my life all new

-Kimberly, Land Of Enchantment

From The Beat: What got you in here if you quit cocaine? Whatever it is, you need to quit that too. Happiness is one of the best anti-drugs. Now that you know what it's like, don't turn back from the new life you have to start.

Fears?

To tell you the truth I'm not really afraid of anything or anybody. At this point of my life I just man up. When I was a lil' mijo, I used to always listen to the advice adults try to give me. Like man don't cry and if somebody hit you, hit 'em back. I think fear doesn't make you a weak person.

Say for example you in the pen and you scared of somebody, you just go gather up all the fear and anger and beat that person up. Like this one time I was in the East with my potna, just walking down the street. Then out of nowhere five big ass enemies walk up to us. I guess they tried to check up or whatever.

Then they raised up my potna Estebon's shirt and seen a black belt. You know how people wear black belts if they don't bang. But they assumed that we were. From that point I knew we was going to have to do something. The next thing I took off on one of them. I guess the fear I had, was no longer a factor. Then everybody started fighting.

After about five minutes I heard sirens coming closer and closer. So me and my potna got up out of here. I ain't gone lie I left with a lump on my eyes and a busted nose. But it was worth it. They had left with bruises too.

So next time I'm in that situation I'm just going to make one phone call to the homies. It ain't no time to be afraid in life, you just have to go hard.

-Lil' Marcus, Alameda

From The Beat: It sounds like you weren't even looking for trouble, it just found you. This is what happens when you grow up in the streets - but our next question for you is this. You have a plan for the "Next time" you end up in a similar situation. But can you also control how often that happens? Are there certain times of day, certain frames of mind that are more dangerous than others? Because the less times it happens, the more likely you can stay on track and focus on what you need to be a success in this life.

Candy Girl

Wow watch out now,

It's the little on no I'm not bow-wow,

I'm that candy girl,

That bamma twirl

Sweet like cinnamon,

With a candy swirl,

I like sugar and spice,

I flow so nice,

Colorful ice like rainbow right?

Sweet like a lifesaver,

Go more flavor than a pack of Now Or Later

Fifteen years old the baby diva,

And the kids at school calling mw the baby trina,

Step on the bat make your fingers smack,

And do the peanut butter jelly with a baseball bat,

Taste like gummy bears,

Skittles and Kit-Kats,

I'm the young girl rapping this thing with that,

Got more flavors than starburst,

I keep my penny candy in my product purse,

If I get a little sassy, pardon me y'all,

Me you will be play in with dolls,

I'm that good, good girl,

Candy girl, baby doll diva. With the baby doll swirl

If you ain't here to party,

We're not having that,

So don't get catch in a cabbage patch.

-Da Baddest, Alameda

From The Beat: Your words rhyme, in time, they sparkle and shine/ Like silver polish on a bright new dime/We hope you get away from these jailhouse bars/To shout your flow up to the stars/Why waste your time singing out the system/When you could be on the streets makin' 'em listen?

What Brightens Up My Day

One of the few things in my life that makes me smile from the inside is my family members. They have been around all my life and they know how to make me smile and laugh. I love them so much that it puts a smile on my face when I see or think about them.

My females in my life make me smile too, because they can do the things to me and for me that everyone else can't. When I get a lot of money and when I spend a lot of money I'm happy because I just get this stunna feeling inside.

I make jokes often to brighten up everybody's day. I give a lot of things to people to help them out when they're doin' bad, because I would want somebody to show me the same love if I was like that.

I also smile when I think of all the fun times I had in the past with my loved ones, especially the ones who ain't here anymore. RIP Vice Versa and Nae Nae, because most of the time that's the one guaranteed thing to make me feel better when I'm out of it.

- Lil' Markie-bo, Alameda

From The Beat: This is some powerful writing. You have so many people who care about you, and you appreciate it. Better yet, it's cool that you like to brighten up everyone else's day and you treat people the way you would want to be treated. We bet reading this piece brightens up a few people's days as well!

Reflection

What's up Beat? This is yo' boy Repo back up in this hellhole.

I can't believe this shhh. I just left two months ago to a placement, after being here for months. I've missed so much stuff: The whole summer, my birthday, and now I am gonna miss Christmas and the third New years in a row, all because I ran from a stupid placement.

But I made it worse; I got caught in another case of a high-speed chase. Now I just gotta sit here and for the judge to say he's sending me to CYA because of my last case.

But maybe it's for the best for me in the future. That's all I'm looking for now, screw all this lil' kid stuff, always running from the cops, drugs, hitting licks. It's over, it's time for me to grow up and become a man for my family and my girl and most of all for me. Well that's it wish me the best late

-Repo, Alameda

From The Beat: You've been through it, and through it, and through it - but we have confidence that you won't let yourself get caught up again. We really admire how you ended your writing by stepping up to the plate and recognizing that it's time to make some changes for your family, but most importantly for yourself. Best of Luck Repo!

Why?

Why do people make decisions, when they know it won't work?

Why do people do wrong, when there is always a right?

Why do husbands cheat, when they suffer to love their wife?

They move to the hood and sell coke to survive in life. That's like if you meet Beyonce, you'll forget about your wife.

If there is no wrong, how can there be right?

If there is no bad, how can you live the good life?

-Cameron, Alameda

From The Beat: These are all powerful questions, and we spent some time trying to come up with answers. The only thing we could think of is that we believe there is such a thing as wrong—and such a thing as bad... just the way you do, which means that inside, we always know exactly what is the right thing to do, even though we don't always follow our best instincts. Are you the same?

Group Homes Suck

What up Beat, it's ya boy Lil' Mainey also known as Dominic. Well I just wanted to write about my first group home experience and why I ran.

I left ALACO Juvenile Hall August 8th; it took me three hours to get there (group home). When I got there I thought it was gonna be cool 'cause I'd have all my clothes and I wouldn't be locked up.

Well first they stripped me of all my red and blue clothes. So I only had three shorts, three shirts, two pants, three boxers and three socks. Everything was cool for the first two weeks. I kinda liked it, good food, and I had a little fun. But I couldn't write nobody and I couldn't call nobody, things started turning hellish. The kids stole one of my shorts, both my pants, and one of my boxers. Can you believe it? My boxers!

I asked the group home to reimburse me for what was stolen. I waited for two months, in that time, the staff started to get very disrespectful and one even threatened me. I pretty much just got tired of cleaning everyday and holding my tongue for so long. I was literally going crazy. I couldn't take it anymore.

Not having anything, so I left. I came back to the Bay. I couldn't find a job because the police were chasing me everywhere for just a warrant. I got tired of running everyday, so I left to Reno. I was out there for a week and got a job detailing cars for \$45 a car, two or three cars a day. I was doing that for a week and I had a whole bunch of clothes and shoes. I had stuff that I got on my own. I was proud of myself. I wasn't out committing crimes like I used to. I wanted to be better myself.

I got arrested a couple of weeks later for my warrant. They only stopped me because they thought I was someone else. So now, I'm here waiting to go to camp. It's a six-month program and I turn 18 in six months. I'll be able to graduate or get my G.E.D. get on the basketball team and I get a home passes. Hopefully my Mom lets me come home. Well that's my experience for the past four or five months or so. 'Till next time, love, peace & chicken grease.

-Lil' Mainey, Alameda

From The Beat: Thank you for sharing your experience with us, from the beginning! It must have been frustrating to try to do right with all these stresses on you - but once this is all behind you, then you can continue to graduate and get on the basketball team and reconnect with your Mom. We know you can do it.

A Step Closer to Manhood

Whats up, Beat Within? This week I found out where I'll be going to and I don't agree with it, but I gotta deal with it. I'll be goin' to a group home until I turn 18 possibly. (Reminder: I'm only 16).

I was sentenced to do 18 to 24 months in a group home, but I may get out in just a year or right under a year if I'm doin' really good in the group home. I'm hoping that I can get released from my group home early because I plan to do good and I miss being home with my family. That gives me determination to work hard so I can be back with them. 18 to 24 months is a really long time, but when you want to grow up and be a man like I do, you gotta tough it out and do what's needed so you can be a step closer to manhood.

-Harold, Alameda

From The Beat: You're wise to look at the big picture here. You're young and have much to look forward to in life. When you're older, you will probably look back and be glad that you did a good program and made it through group home. You're right that this is an important step on your way to being a man. We wish you the best of luck. Keep your head up and remember your dreams! Too many young people see being in a group home as a dead end, but really, this can be a new start.

Why

Why do people keep goin' bad,
when they know it only gets worse?
Why do people in jail always wanna say they won the
fight?

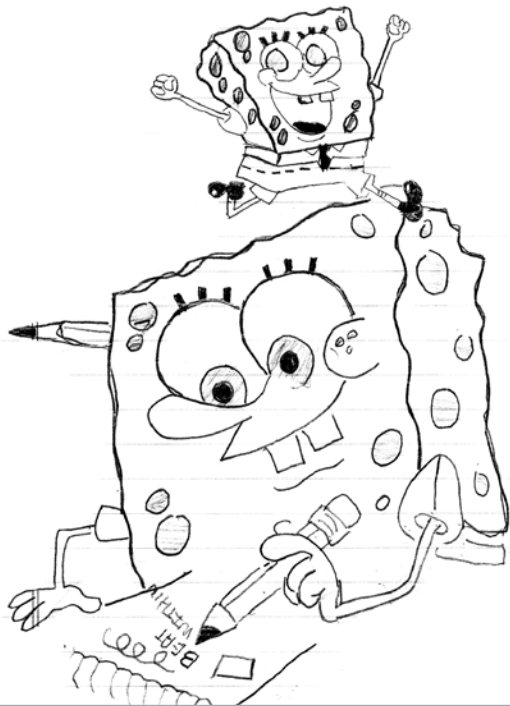
Why do people choose money and drugs,
when they could've had a family and a wife?
And what about the kids that needed a father in their
life?

When you need money bad enough, you can't tell wrong
from right.

Until you get some, do right in your life, call it God, call
it love,
then call your wife.

-Allen, Alameda

From The Beat: This poem kicks off with some of the mysteries of human self-destruction and pain, but then it comes full circle around with a reminder of everything that matters in this world, and how it all comes back to love. Do you feel that you have taken this same journey in your life, from confusion to hope?



What Makes Me Smile!

My family makes me smile when I go back in my mind
and think of all the good that my family has done for me.
All the love and affection that my family has gave to me
through the times when I needed them the most.

There is a vision that always comes to my head that
never fails to make me smile, no matter what part of the
day it is, no matter if I'm happy, no matter if I'm sad. When
I think of my son, my only son, it warms my heart. It can
bring me out of my saddest moments when I think of the
day that he was born.

The first day I held my newborn son in my hand. No
one can take that feeling away from me. Because to me,
it don't get no better than that. That day was the happiest
day of my life. I still remember it like it was yesterday. I
miss my boy.

-Michael, Alameda

From The Beat: Thanks for sharing this beautiful memory with The Beat! What advice will you have for your son as he gets older, about staying out of trouble and staying out of the system?

Crackin' Food

What's good wit' tha Beat? Man, it's me, Lil' Rob, still in
here. But chea, I'm going to let you know about crackin'
food. One food that be crackin' is lumpia. It is a Filipino-
style egg roll that has ground meat with minced onions
and minced garlic mixed. Then you fry them thangs up and
serve it with some hot and sour sauce and you official.

When I get out if dis place, I'm going to a authentic
Filipino spot called Kadok's. they got the most crackin'
lumpias there. But I might order a breakfast plate that
includes garlic fried rice, Filipino sausage called longanisa,
and eggs over easy with chopped up tomatoes.

A food that needs to be on the county menu is
lumpias because I think everyone would like it. In my
neighborhood, there is a place called New Star, and they
got the best Chinese food for cheap with reasonable
prices under six bucks.

One thing I like to cook is steak marinated with soy
saue, minced garlic and pepper.

Well, Beat, that's what's crackin' to eat.

-Lil' Rob, San Francisco

From The Beat: We really appreciate the fact that you wrote enough to fill more than a page about lumpia and other favorite foods. Most people just tell us what their favorite food is, and end it there. But you told us how to make it, why it's good, what other foods you make, and even where we can get the best and cheapest Chinese food. That's good to know because after reading your piece, we're hungry!

Smile From New York

There is this one person who makes me smile,
she is one smile away
from any feeling she gives me to when, I'm mad, sad,
happy, hyper,
to any feeling that's in my boy.
But this girl is from the east, and with her half of the
smile and me from the west,
and my half we come together to make two sides united
with one homogenous smile.
Her accent makes me smile, her feelings make me smile,
her plus me equals a smile.
Her Queens love is a Royal smile.

-Amor de Ray, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Clever words to describe a lady from the other side of the country. Your writing is also a clever way to describe a beautiful smile. We look forward to more creative writings from you.

My Addictions

I'm addicted to fancy clothes
Bad girls that ain't 'ho'es
Rappers dat got sick flows
Tight cars sittin' on duce 4s
I'm also addicted to gettin' money
Comedians dat's funny
I'm not addicted to bein' bummy
'Cause people like them get found in the slump, B
I'm addicted to my family
Livin' my life happily
I'm mackin' dem, they ain't mackin' me
And I ain't never been trashy
I'm young, fly and flashy
Got white chicks dat flash me
I got handles I'll never crash, B
I ain't go lie, I cherish dat purple leaf
And dat strawberry Swisher Sweet

-Lil Dre, San Francisco

From The Beat: We appreciate this list of your addictions, but it raises some questions in our minds. For example, if you're addicted to living your life happily and to your family, why do you allow yourself (by doing whatever it is you do) to be taken away from that happy life and family? Who are the comedians you think are funny?

My Baby Brother

The thing that makes me smile,
 Is not so much a thing but a person.
 This person will make me smile from ear to ear.
 This person can't write.
 He can't even talk in sentences.
 But he can always make me smile.
 He picks me up when I am down.
 He makes me glad when I am sad.
 I don't know what I would do without him.
 I love him with all my heart.
 This person is my baby brother.
 I never thought I could love someone so much,
 When he's only one years old...

- Julia, Land Of Enchantment

From The Beat: It's a shame that you aren't able to be with your little brother. He needs your presence and you chose a bad path. We hope that time doesn't slip by and you're not able to see him grow. Instead of thinking of yourself, think of your brother and what you need to do to be with him. He'll love you for it.

My Best Friend

One thing that always makes me smile is my best friend.
 She is fun to be around and she is easy to talk to.
 When I tell her a joke, she laughs. She is a person I can rely on.
 I remember the first time I met this wonderful girl.
 We were both so young and innocent.
 A friend's girlfriend introduced me to this special girl.
 We started off as a hook-up, with kissing and phone calls.
 It got a little serious after a while, she became my girl.
 I used to lie, cheat, and love to be with my boys.
 Drinking and being with other hoers.
 I had her in check, but then it changed.
 Inside I felt weird and strange.
 I started to care.
 I started to love, had to choose between my hood and my girl.
 The days were better when I started to pay the attention she deserved.
 The months felt like seconds.
 Then my lies were put through the test of time.
 My actions were not good.
 I could not stand to see her cry.
 So I made a choice, screw the hood and my boys!

-Javier, Land Of Enchantment

From The Beat: We're glad you realized what's important and hope you always stand by that decision. You'll be tempted in many ways but it takes a real man to stand by his word.

Making My Mom Smile By Going To School

What makes me smile is when I see my mom every day when she comes to see me in jail. What also makes me smile is when I get to see my girl and kick it with her or with lil' Bra and lil' Sis.
 When I get out, I'm going back to school and get my education because I know I've been missing a lot of it. So I'm going to go back and I'm going to get a job to keep me busy, so I won't think of doing nothing hot, so I won't come back here. And I'm going to need some money for Christmas. My Sis had a baby, so I know she needs some help gettin' clothes, diapers milk, etc...

-Jabari, San Francisco

From The Beat: You are so lucky to have a supportive mom. We know that if you keep your promise of getting your education (even when it's hard, even when it's boring), you will give your mom lots of reasons to smile. The best Christmas present you can give your mom, your sis, her baby and yourself is yourself.

Football, The Anti Drug

Playin' football is fun. It's like contact with other people. When I have a pissed off day, I go straight to the field, go hit a football and do what I do. I'm the smallest one on the team, but they run hecka slow, and they can't catch me. When they tackle me, it hurts.

I hate going head up with the other players 'cause they huge. But I get right back up again. It takes me a couple minutes, but I do.

When the doctor told me I couldn't play football no more because I pulled a muscle in my back and neck. (Well, actually, somebody did it for me because they put their hands in the back of my helmet, like they were gonna pull it off me, and it flipped me over.) That's when I started using drugs, smoking weed and cigars.

When I get out, I might smoke cigarettes once in a while, but not weed any more, because I got a PO.

I haven't tried being in basketball yet because the season is over. When it started I had a broken arm. But I can still play. It's just a little harder to shoot sideways.

-Stephaun, San Francisco

From The Beat: We appreciate reading about how it feels to be tackled on the football field. It's just like trying to stay on the good side of the law, but falling. It hurts, but if you want to move, you get up and keep going. It'll be good for you to have to give up weed for a while. We hope you don't even smoke cigarettes, 'cause they're no better.

My Daughter and Her Mother

Well today I'm going to write what makes me smile, is my daughter and her mother. And being behind these walls makes me think where did I go wrong? I wanted the very best for my daughter and her mother, but instead I ended up in another situation that I couldn't escape out of.

I miss waking up early morning and hearing the sound of my daughters voice calling me daddy! And the smile, man, what a smile she use to give me.

Now I am stuck behind these bars reminiscing, and wishing that I went back to my little girl and her mother. Living in this place is like a fallen world.

-Puppet, Alameda

From The Beat: A fallen world, you said it well. But you know what, it's not permanent, you're chance to pick yourself back up is coming up soon, and you just have to take it - for real, for yourself and for your new beautiful family.

Faith Makes Me Smile

It makes me smile when I wake up to my daughter laughing and playing
 It makes me smile when my daughter learns a new word.
 She's what makes me smile.
 That girl is the only reason I want to change how I live in this world.

It's taking so much time and sacrificing...
 And sometimes it feels like I can never do it!

I've had to give up so much at a time,
 when I'm not sure I'm ready for it.

I know I'm capable
 I finally feel like I'm getting to that point in my life...
 Everything else just isn't worth it anymore.
 Screw the dumb shhh, forget the nonsense, in and out of Juve.

Who wants that? I know I don't and every time I fall,
 I'll just get through it and get back up.
 Faith. That's what makes me smile.

Desiree, Land Of Enchantment

From The Beat: You said that you've, "had to give up so much at a time", that is a mother's duty. Living the life that you have been is selfish and wrong. We hope that you show your daughter that you're capable of being a caring mother. Keep the faith!

A Flow

I grow up
as a screw up
without a mother
my role model was a drunken old man
my dad
because the problems of his past
but the question was:
would all that effect me, his son?
maybe I should of took my life
when I had the chance
grew up without nothing
promises were made
but never got nothing
just a hug and a laugh
I always wanted a good family
something I never had
my baby mama and my son was
as close as I came
and with him now and
I broke up with her a long time ago
but now they captured me
and put me in a two man cage
all I feel is anger and pain
the jail just ain't right
nothing but time lost in the game
slavery time
I thought it was over
but to me this is like modern slavery
time all over

-Pewe, Santa Clara

From The Beat: This is a harsh flow, but also has some very sensitive moments. It seems writing is a great way for you to express yourself. Keep doing it.

A Kid

Children. It's children that always make me smile, that always brightens my day.

I guess maybe I'd be a good dad. I'd like to be a father, but it is the biggest responsibility that anyone could have, except of course being a mother.

It is sad how many blow that responsibility. I would have to teach my kid a lot, not so much teach him knowledge, but spirituality and the importance of living the right way. But most of all I'd teach him how to enjoy life in any situation. I wish I dad a father who could have taught me these things!

-Monk, Santa Clara

From The Beat: Nice piece. You're right, there are a lot of guys that do blow the opportunity on being a dad. You sound like you would make a great dad, and we hope one day you get that chance. Do not forget to stay in touch with us in CYA Monk, it's been a pleasure reading your work and having you in the workshops!!

Juvenile hall

Juvenile hall got me losing my mind.
'Cause I can't eat I can't sleep my skin dry all the time.
My stomach hurt my headaches and I can't get high
Off the girl touch the Moon and sit down on the sky
I can't drink what I wanna drink to make me relax
Cough syrup, grey goose, and some water and kick back
do

What it do get girls, pet cats and get money
Check dough any weather snow, rain, wind or sunny
This is all in the past cause I'm locked up now but its
gon' change when I get out 'cause I'm gonna touch down
in my town.

-Shady Bo, Alameda

From The Beat: The question is do you want your ticket out of the hall to be one way or round trip? Because if you want a one way then you can't go back to your old scene, you need to move on to a new way of living. Otherwise you're right back here, where you don't want to be!

My Little Sister

The thing that makes me smile is my little sister. Every day on the outs, my little sister wakes me up by jumping on me. It's a very cool feeling.

Now look where am I at, behind these bars. Man how much I miss her. Her birthday was on the fourth, which means that I missed it this year. She turned seven years old. I love my little sister more than anything. She makes me smile everyday

-Castillo, Alameda

From The Beat: It breaks our heart to picture you and your sister separated from each other. But you put a smile on our face describing how much you love her. Families need to be together, it keeps them strong. We hope you find your way back to your family soon.

The Guy That Makes Me Smile....

I met this guy and he has been the one person to put a smile on my face. He is there for me when I need to talk and knows he can always come to me when he needs someone.

Although I wish I was the only girl in his life, I share a spot with another lucky girl...his daughter. The first time I laid eyes on them, they held a spot in my heart. I got to the point where I'm ready to do big things with my life and I hope that those two are around to experience the future with me. No matter what happens, I hope they are still around to continue making me smile. The one thing I want is my chance to show him that together we can make the impossible possible. Much love and respect

- His Special Girl, Santa Clara

From The Beat: It seems like you have a good foundation waiting for you when you get out and that you are ready for big things. But how will you make sure that you are ready for them?

The Anti Drug

My anti-drug since I've been sober from drugs and alcohol is hell-of-skits. I think about going back to football because I was hell-of-good at it. It was and still is my high, 'cause I'll hit and stick anyone. I played corner-back, shut down any air attack! Feel me!

Another anti drug for me is flirting with all these girls. I be playin sometimes but it is still a high for me. Some days I get turned down but it don't stop me from hollering at these females. My favorite line is, "eh girl you lookin' fine," or, "what's up wit it?" I got hell of energy so I try to see what type of female I'm hollerin at before I attack.

Anti drug number three- I write stories - raps - poems - new flirtin' lines - my day (like a journal) - places I like to go and what I be doin' - stuff about friends and family - and review my goals.

Yeah I think writin' keeps me sober the most cause when I feel powerless or anything I can write instead of doin' something stupid I remember how fun it was to thizz, smoke, drank, chill wit' my folks and hella beezies, but I can do all that without drugs and alcohol.

I swear being sober is hell of coo though so I suggest that most of ya'll get clean! You'll look at life in a whole different way.

-Tonamoe, Alameda

From The Beat: Those are all very fun anti-drugs. Playing sports, talking to females, writing, and setting goals for yourself are all very positive things for you. We're glad to hear that you don't need to be high to have fun. You right everybody should try to get on the hype you on. Stay focused and stay positive. You can't go wrong with any of your anti-drugs.

What Makes You Smile

What makes you smile, is it the way I talk or the way I walk?

Either way, when we look at each other things seem to spark.

What makes you smile, is it the sound of my voice?
Maybe it's when I call you and the first thing I say is

how are you doing today?

What makes you smile?

Is it my dreads or could it be my smile,
because everything about you drives me wild.

What makes you smile?

-Liz & Katier (dedicated to Dominique)

From The Beat: We really enjoyed reading your poem, especially the way you flipped the question on its head, and turned our question to you into a sweet and slick love poem. We hope this girl makes you smile like you say - And vice versa!

I Love Money More Than Sin

Something that makes me smile is money.

Money makes me smile because of the way it makes me feel. It makes me feel like I'm on top of the world...LOL. When you don't have money you feel down and out, but when you got it you feel up and in. I love money more than sin.

-Tay

From The Beat: It's not just the money though right? It's also how you earn the money. If you get it legit - the way that's slow and sure - than you don't have to pay that 'looking over your shoulder price'. Plus you can feel proud of yourself on the inside. There's nothing like a legit paycheck to make you feel like you can be somebody in this world.

Free Me Fast

Rest in peace Ant.

Man I'm back in this place,

Never gonna have a decent smile on my face

Because this ninjas is having a rat race.

So who's goin' to become the master, but snitches talk up faster

Heaven is for the real ninjas and hell is for the snitches. Free all my ninjas. I know I should have been coming home this weekend.

-Lil' Dedaman

From The Beat: See, this is what happens when you run! We love printing your work but we hate thinking of you getting longer time - and you blame the "snitches" but you know there's only one way to avoid getting ratted out on - and that's to NOT do the stuff they can rat on you for! We say this with respect, and the hope that you find your freedom soon.

Man, I Miss My Dog!

Man, I miss my dog. All the times when we used to hang. All the time we used to slang. I miss my boy just being in my presence. We ain't even got to be doing nothing, just having all my patnas around just kickin' it was good enough for me. At least I know that I would never let anything happen to any one of my close friends. At least not on my time, not on my watch, I can't do it. I would have rather died and took that bullet for you bro. You ain't never did nothing to nobody but keep to your sports and try to be the coolest cat around. Never had yo' head down, always had it high. You were proud of who you were and I respect that to this day. I miss you, Drew.

-Michael

From The Beat: We are so sorry for your loss. Your loyalty and love for your friends are beautiful qualities you have as a person. We hope that you will honor your friend's memory by staying safe and staying out of trouble. We think he would want this for you.

What Makes Me Smile

The person who makes me smile is my girl, my baby momma. The beauty of her eyes, the moments we had together. My smile belongs to her. Every time I think about her makes me smile. Before I lay my head down and go to sleep, I smile and she smiles back.

-Your man

From The Beat: She is a lucky lady! We hope she gets to read your sweet words.

What Makes Me Smile?

To keep it solid, what keeps me smiling is money. To some people, it may not make them smile. When I'm on the outs and sellin' drugs, sometimes I might not even be sellin' drugs, I might just be sellin' candy at school 'cause you can make dough there, too.

For some reason, it's like every time I get more than like over a bird (a hundred dollars), I feel like just cheesin' hecka hard. Then sometimes you just want to go out and rob somebody for more.

Another thing that makes you smile is knowing that you knitted, when you got fresh new orange, cream, and gray eight jordans on yo' feet, and then you got some fresh LRG's or Monkeys on with the fresh grill ten on top and bottom with the block number on 'em. Then, when you walk past a female, she be tryin' to act like she don't see, but when you holler at her and smile she gotta put her glasses on 'cause you blindin' her. Yep, I be lovin' it, and then you and yo' patnas smokin', then you really just can't stop cheesin', gigglin' and whatnot.

And last but not least, when there's a newborn in a family, you gotta respect and just smile, feel me?

-Lil' Jon Jon

From The Beat: Thanks for letting us know what makes you smile!

It Is Love

You're the girl I want to spend the rest of my life with. Have kids and die with, argue and fight with, you are my wifey, you're the one I want to spend quality time with hold hands and cry with. Promise to never lie and deny things, just say "I did it" and let's continue being us. Because whatever happened, happened before you. I could never replace us. Trust that you are mine and I am yours and that is LOVE.

-Eduardo

From The Beat: Trust and openness are huge parts of love. Best wishes to you and your girl.

Who Is Moe?

Who is Moe?

Moe is a creator.

Moe is a player.

Moe is a go-getter.

Moe is a son of a mother.

Moe is black.

Moe is smart.

Moe gets the girl

Moe gets money.

Moe has fun.

Moe is a beast.

But most of all Moe is me, that's all I can be.

-Moe

From The Beat: We have so many questions about Moe, and especially about Moe ten years from now. Will Moe be a teacher? A doctor? A student? A father? Now that you've told The Beat who you are, tell The Beat where you're going!

Still Mobbin'

What's up, Beat? This Young Shawny Bo here wit' my weekly report.

Lately, I ain't been doin' cool. I found out that Tuesday night one of my ninjas I used to be wit' got shot four times: once in the chest, once in the arm, and two in the leg. I haven't been able to hear anything more about it. The only reason I found out was from my dad and he only came Wednesday. And my mom don't know nothing more about it. But the cold part was this was one of my ninjas I be wit' damn near everyday. So that's like eatin at me, plus I'm in here wit' a bunch of dudes that act like sissies 'cause all they do is talk. But it's good they just talk. I'm keep it mobbin' for my ninjas. I hope [my friend] still mobbin' too.

-Young Shawny Bo

From The Beat: We're sorry to hear about your potna getting shot, and we hope you get more news soon. When you say it's eating at you that you used to be with your friend who got shot nearly everyday, what exactly about it is bothering you? Do you feel like you could have prevented it from happening if you had been there? Do you feel guilty? Do you think it could have been you instead of him that got shot? Will this change your plans for your life on the outs? We hope that you might share your thoughts and reflections on how this sad event affects you...

What Makes You Smile?

The only thing that can make smile right now is if Control calls this unit and says Ronald is being released. Then I'm home to go see my girl.

-Ronald

From The Beat: We hope you get your wish soon. What is your plan for not coming back to the Hall?

You Said

You said that you loved me,
And that you'll never go away.
You said that you'd wait for me,
But you left the same day.
Now I ask you,
How do you feel today?
You must feel happy,
Breaking my heart this way.

-Yogi The Bear

From The Beat: We hope that by the time this piece comes out, some of the pain of this breakup will have passed, or, fingers crossed, maybe you and your girl will be back together.

Sports = The Anti Drug

My anti drug is sports. I love to go out and play sport in any type of weather. Baseball And football are the funest sport to play when it is raining. Basketball I'll play no matter what. Its like when I play sports when I'm mad or sad or any type of feeling that I feel like I forget about it and its like it never happened and the competition is fun, especially when they are a lot better than you and play someone better than you.

And when I play with my friends it is even better than going out smoking or drinking you can just go out there and have fun and just fool around. To me sports is my anti drug and I hope all the other people have an anti drug to keep them out of trouble and for the people that don't, you need to find one and use it.

-Beau

From The Beat: That's great to hear that you have an anti-drug. Not many people have one 'cause obviously everyone else is on some type of drug. How do you stay focused?

What Makes You Smile?

The thing that make me smile is seeing my mom and dad and knowing that my family is ok. And that I wake up every day that I'm not promised. Another thing is seeing beautiful ladies and my so-called girlfriend. Another thing is when somebody says something funny.

- 150 Reporter

From The Beat: Those are all things to remember and feel good about.

The Lesson

What makes me smile is my mom, my little sister, my family, and my girlfriend. I love 'em all, and every time I'm around 'em I'm happy.

I wish I was around them right now. I haven't talked to my girlfriend since November 27th when I was at home me and her talked all night. I seen her almost every other day but now I really miss her and I miss my mom a lot too. I hope they are all doing good out there, its hard living in here without all the people that I love. I've learn my lesson it's my first and last time here.

-Cherry

From The Beat: Good for you. We are sure you mean business. So all the best in handling yourself in a safe and productive way!

Smiling

What makes me smile is when I... see my mom happy when I make my mom happy or smile its because I in the house before ten I doing good at school not getting in trouble at school or on the street. Doing things for her also make her smile. So when she's happy I'm happy.

What also make me smile is when I pass in something that's good for me such as school, and when I play football, and basketball it make me smile and other people who is looking at me play. When I see my sister doing good in school and at home it make me feel wonderful because sometimes she will not listen and not do homework but now she is getting A's, B's, and C's in school so that make me smile cause she's improved and doing better.

-Lil' Tay

From The Beat: We're glad to hear that your sister has improved. We're also glad to hear all of your positive thoughts. You are wasting your time messing around and getting caught up just to be away from your family. Shape up a little bit, so you can be on the outs with your sister and your moms, and then all three of y'all could be smiling.

How I Got My Nickname

Hey, what's up with it, Beat? Well, it's me once again: Smiley, still here.

Today, I'm gonna write about what makes me smile, or how I got my aka: Smiley. It was back in the day when I met this beautiful girl named Marcitza. Since I met her, we would always kick it and have hella fun, so we started to get to know each other better. Until this one day I decided to ask her out 'cause I felt she was the one for me, so I did and she said "yeah". She felt the same way, too. So I was hella happy 'cause we were together and I never loved before and I will always love her.

Anyways, the next day I was kickin' it with my homies and they notice me smiling all day for no reason and ever since then I've been smiling and I will always be me, Mario, aka Smiley. Much love for you mija. Te Amo.

-Mario

Form The Beat: Aw, how sweet! We have been chatting with you in workshops for the past few weeks and hadn't yet heard the story of your aka! Thanks for sharing this great memory with The Beat. It made us smile. Ain't love grand...

New Addictions

Before I went to Juvenile Hall I had bad addictions. But when I came to the Hall, I've gotten addicted to reading. It takes my mind off of things, like being in the hall. When I'm going to get out and (stop?) stuff like smoking, drinking and other stuff, so when I do get out I'm going to read more.

-Tommy Gun

From The Beat: It is great that you have found a new way to take your mind off things. What are some of your favorite books that you have read so far? If you can get addicted to the right things - self-respect, knowledge, and peace, for example, then you could turn your whole life around!

Steak-Cheese Fries

The food I can't wait to eat is steak-cheese fries from the burrito truck in the hood.

-The King's Wife

From The Beat: Steak-Cheese Fries, yet one more reason to fight for our freedom!

Get Active

Why am I in here? Change for what?

Yeah y'all know I got caught for a gun, assault with deadly weapon, possession of a loaded firearm, robbery.

But I beat my case cause I'm the one.

When I get released I'm going to tote that thang again, 'cause my pistol keeps my own life in my hand. If I don't get it, it's in somebody else's.

So I just have to get active.

-Momo

From The Beat: We wish you would get active, for real - not in the way you mean it here, but in the way that activists have been fighting for freedom for decades. It's crazy that you carry a gun, crazy that the streets are so messed up you feel like what you need one. Why not try to use your talents to join the ACTIVE fight to stop the violence? Otherwise, you might end up a victim of it.

These Are The Things I Love

What's the definition

truly happy to me

me and my patnas

kickin' back blowin' some trees

my one and only girl Vicky right by my side

bein in the town gives me a natural high

another thing that makes me happy is chasin the cash
servin the sacks

makin knocks come back fast on blast

we'll put you on roast

jokes amongst homies don't get us wrong

mi casa is mi casa

but to potnas invited

sip brews 'till we coo'

maybe kick some rhymes

plus friendly fightin might hop on the gloves

might go blow for blow or slap box just because

turn blunts into doobies

while playin' games or watchin' movies

reminisin on things we use to be doin'

these things make me happy as always

these are the things I love.

-Spider Man

From The Beat: Thos e might have been the good ol' days, but there is a new day to be had, and given you are now knee deep in the system, it's time to leave the partyin' and fast money in the past, and step up and take care of your business like a young man ought to, meaning school and a legit part time job!!

Untamed Gorilla

Life's what makes me smile
It makes every day worthwhile

From the time I woke up

To the time we squad up

Going hard to the end

Not carin' bout the pen

Side show an hella hoe's

Off patron shinin' in my car

Girls wanna ride

Dudes scared so they hide

Try me I'm teaching lessons on this side

King of the streets

And its known worldwide

-Young King

From The Beat: Why don't care about yo' life why wouldn't you care about the pen/ You don't wanna chill with no females instead you'd rather to do 25 to life with some grown ass men/ In the pen it ain't no cookies and cake/homicide lessons might be a lesson you'll take/ 'Cause ain't nobody untouchable out in the streets/ no matter how much money you got or how much heat/ Not to down play yo' style but it takes a real ninja to know that/ Before it's too late to realize , and yo' life flashes right in front of your eyes like a Kodak/

If...

If I was on the outs, I would go to some place that serves all you can eat so that I could eat until I can't eat anymore. Because the food in here is hella nasty. I would eat anything other than this county food it's hella nasty.

-Critic

From The Beat: Yeah that county food is no joke. It ain't no filet mignon. But you shouldn't be here in the first place. If you weren't locked up you could eat anything you want.

What Makes You Smile

What makes me smile is helping other people. It just gives me a good feeling to help someone. I can get other people to smile by telling them a joke or stare at them a weird way but not in a mean way.

-Beau

From The Beat: Sounds like you got a lot of people skills. That's something for everybody to smile about. You're a very positive dude keep doing what you do.

Sometimes I Smile

Hey what it do Beat? This ya' boy young Fred from the hood.

Some of the reasons why I smile is when I'm at home with my 9 month old son when he says (dah dah) to me. It just makes me feel complete when I'm around him. I don't really understand why I made the decision to do what I did to stay away from him. Because I know that when I'm away from him I start stressing about what he's doing.

I even stress about life and what I want to do when I leave this place. I don't ever want to step my foot in another institution facility because I know that I wont like it. So what I need to do is just focus on the positive and leave the negative shhh behind. And if I could do that I'll be where I should've been a couple of months ago and that's with my son because he makes me smile. RIP Ant H - Bo

-Fred

From The Beat: Life is rough and sometimes we make bad decisions. Stress takes over and sometimes it doesn't let us focus. But you seem to already know the business. You have realized that nothing is more important than being out there with your son. You realized the mistake you made and corrected it. Stay focus and don't let anything get in the way of your freedom and most importantly your son. He needs a father in his life, not behind bars. Keep your head high and stay focused.

Loving People Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is when I'm with people I love or when I hear things or see things that would remind me of my family and friend. My family and friends make me smile because I know they care and everyday they tell me what's right and what is wrong. Family does make me feel better because I know that in my life, I have something to cherish and remember when I'm old.

-Wanting love

From The Beat: There isn't anything like making memories with your family and friends. That's what's life is all about, creating those joyful memories that'll last you a lifetime.

What Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is my main thang my lady. I'm not sure why but I guess every time I see her, I always start smiling. I don't know why. I think its because she's hella beautiful and I'm happy with her. Even when I talk to her on the phone she be saying stuff that makes me laugh. Don't know she makes me happy and I make her happy & we smile together.

-Lil' K

From The Beat: Sounds like you are in love. Why you wasting yo' time chilling with a whole bunch of other dudes in here? You could be on the outs chilling with your lady, man. You could be with her right now instead of just thinking of her. We don't think she's happy with you in jail, so get out of here, get productive, and don't come back.

I Told You

I told you I loved you,
But you didn't care.
I told you I needed you,
But you swung your hair.
I called you a pretty flower,
You called me an ugly bear.
I treated you nicely,
But you played me unfair.

-Yogi The Bear

From The Beat: The path to true love never runs smooth, so the poets say. Did you write this with a particular girl in mind? How did she play you unfair? How long has it been since you saw her?

Our Special Moments

The things that make me smile is the look on my man's face when we are in our special moments. I smile because I know it is makin' us both feel like we are connected in a special way that no one could ever come between.

-The King's Wife

From The Beat: We love to hear you describe the feelings you have for your man and your daughter. You want to be a wonderful mother and wife one day, so we want to hear how you plan on becoming a strong young woman.

My Life

I live the fast life
Get money get fast
I wish I could stop
That way I live,
This life on the outs,
And when I'm with my family,
All those ninjas know me,
And tell me to stop doing what
I'm doing and go back to school.

-Baby Girl

From The Beat: We second their emotion - yes, you should quit the fast life and hit the path to success, starting with school. The real question is what do YOU want to do?

Feeling Better

What makes me smile is when I complete something I never thought I could. Like not doing drugs for a month, it makes me smile. Or doing good in school, not getting in trouble on passing the class that I never thought I could pass that makes me smile. Making my mom happy when I help her around the house that makes me smile and yea when I smile it does make me feel better.

-Young Johnny

From The Beat: Lets get back to those times so you can smile again. Make your self smile by getting out of juvenile and accomplishing the things you mention in this piece.

I'm Back

What's up Beat? This is young girl; damn I was out for like two weeks. Now I'm back, cause this one girl was calling me some type of female dog, ninjas so I just went AWOL, and heck no! So I did not call my PO and you probably know the rest.

And once again I'm back, just writing to The Beat Within. Now that I'm back just wanted to send a shout out to all these people that are in the hall, also up in this unit mad as hell that I'm in here. Keep your heads up Beat Within.

-Baby Girl

From The Beat: We're glad to see your words, but sad to see you back. And we're sorry the drama got to you. What's the next step? Another placement? Keep us posted.

Smiles Make Me Smile

When God gives me another day to live my life it is joy that I am in this world. God's world, that is what makes me smile.

When I see my little brother it make me smile. When I see the world smile it is joy to know that someone else is smiling.

-Deanna

From The Beat: We hope you have more and more chances to make those smiles come through. Because it's time to put the tears behind you and get more of what makes you happy! How will you do that?

When My Mom Died...

When my mom died, I didn't cry at first. But when it was time to see her in the casket, everything broke down and I did not know what to do.

But later on in life it felt like I was getting over it -- until one day I was smoking in my room and then my mom's picture fell in my lap and I started to think.

-Lil' Mel

From The Beat: There is no way to ever really "get over" losing someone you love. Maybe it's more that we learn how to find joy and love in our past memories and the pain becomes a bit easier to bear. What is it that you most loved about your mom that you can still keep with you?

Smile When You Feel That Special Way

What make me smile is when I am with my family and with my girl. Because nobody can make you feel the way family does, and when you're with your girl.

She is the only one that can make you feel that special way because they know how to make you feel good. that's what make me smile.

-Shorty

From The Beat: We hope on this note that you get back to your girl, and your family soon. Because honestly, aren't they worth so much more to you than the BS you got caught up in?

Smilin' Keeps Me Connected to You

No matter where I'm at or what I'm doin'
 You're the one that keeps me smilin'
 And when I stare into your face
 Your blue eyes take me to that special place
 That only you can, 'cause you're my man
 No matter what I'm feeling, or where I'm goin'
 You're the one that keeps me smiling
 And when you do your silly things you know I'm the one
 laughing
 The only way you can make me because I'm your lady
 No matter what, I love you.
 Smiling keeps me connected to you.

-Lady Awesome

From The Beat: This love poem would put a smile on anyone's face. We hope the person you sent it to appreciates the love he has, and we hope you are getting the love you deserve!

Free Write, My Thoughts

Wassup Beat? This ya boi Shady Bo writing to kill one more time.
 Man I'm gonna get straight to the point, I don't feel good living anymore.

This max unit got me going crazy. I only get five-minute showers. I haven't got a straight thru phone call since I been here and that been about three weeks already.

But anyways this food is not sitting in my stomach. And I can't eat when I want to. I'm losing weight and my skin is drying out.

-Shady Bo

From The Beat: Since that first shock of transferring to Max, you've become a worker and been a lot happier than you seem in this piece. We're glad you pushed through that dark period.

My Favorite Food is Fast Food

Ma favorite foods is McDonald's, Wingstop, Jack in the Box, and Burger King.

The reason why I said these restaurants is because there's a specific things on the list. At McDonald's the food the I like is cheeseburgers because they be so greasy an they melt in yo' mouth.

Wingstop is the best 'cause they have a variety of chicken. My favorite flavor is lemon pepper chicken. That's all I wanna write.

-Lil' Lhaz

From The Beat: You just made our mouths water with your descriptions of all these foods, do you also cook?

Money

Money is what I like to get
 Smoke a few blunts or a beela
 I get money the fast way on my way to Y-A
 But when I get out back on the grind
 'Cause I need mine
 I don't even want to shine I just want my money and do
 what I do
 Best sell coke bust thangs on one
 With my main telling me stop doing dirt
 She want me home cause she tired of being hurt but oh
 well.

-Lil' Kari

From The Beat: You can't shine when you're covered with the dirt you do... which is too bad because we can see that you shine from inside, you don't need all that external BS. But until you believe it yourself, nothing anyone tells you will come through.

A Little Girl With Game

Here came a surprise to the world something like you,
 no big thang just a little girl with game. Didn't choose her
 mother damn straight not the brother, livin' a life she'd
 be happy to change.

But it's self-confidence she had to gain!

Livin' life as a hustle, ended up doin' time. Prayed to
 God to listen to her cries.

Never got a chance to go to school, never got to live by
 rules because my life chose me.

-Lil' Re-Re

From The Beat: Your past life may have chosen you - but you have more control than you think over your future. You can pick who you spend your time with, where you go at night, what you study. If you study, and mostly, whether or not you surround yourself with positivity. So what's it going to be? What will you choose?

Burrito

I miss my best friend burrito he died. It was five seconds
 that he had left to live. I ate him. Rest in Peace, Super
 Steak Burrito.

-Christian

From The Beat: We knew Burrito. He was a solid friend, a loyal homie, a source of nourishment and joy for his whole neighborhood. We wish him life and glory in that big Taco truck in the sky.

How Do I Overcome My Fears?

I overcome my fears by drinking alcohol and popping
 pills and I live my life as a Mexican rap star. I want to be
 the first Mexican to ride the yellow bus.

I also pray when I want to over my fears. I also talk to
 the O.G. homies about helping me overcome my fears.

-Smokey

From The Beat: If you are needing drank and pills to keep you calm then you haven't overcome your fears at all. The day you can face them sober is the day you'll know you've stepped up to the plate.

Memories from The Outs

What's up Beat! I am writing you once again. I'm writing
 about what makes me smile.

What make me smile is every time I get a visit or when
 my ninja Angelo reminds me about the stuff we used to
 do in the outs or sometimes when I git straight through
 phone calls are when I think of the outs.

Well your boy is going to let you go, but not for long.

-Crazy

From The Beat: Next time you and your boys are reminiscing about the past, also take out a minute to think on the future. What kinds of lives do you want to have? Jobs, family? Do you believe in your future? And if so, what does it look like?

Life Struggle

Life has been a struggle for me. I mean it's hard and
 frustrating at the same time. The reason I think about
 a whole lot is because I can't see my baby mama thinks
 that I'm no good to my daughter cause because be getting
 locked up and messing with other girls.

I mean I really miss her. I hate the life I'm living when
 things is happening. I try not to think about it but it's
 hard.

So I'ma maintain in this game and get through wit'
 life until I see my little girl again.

-Lil' Rondale

From The Beat: You have something new and wonderful to struggle for and to fight for, a little soul that will make it all worthwhile. But yes, if you want that relationship with her, you'll need to make some changes. What kinds of steps will you need to take?

Love For My Child

I got love for my child, as my mother and father love me
I want to get out of here, so I can show my baby girl
the love I have for her, just like the love my mother and
father had for me. It's the way they made me feel and the
way they keep me happy, by never letting me down and
keeping me clothes on my back.

I want the same for my child.

-Young Father

From The Beat: There was no name on this moving piece, so we made one up for you. We hope you don't mind, we chose the name to go with your new commitment to life as a parent, as a son, as a young man.

My Addictive Drug is Sex

My drug is sex. I'm promiscuous. I can't control myself -
I need it I want it, I love it, but why me?

Why do I call myself a sex fiend?

I'm even attracted to girls I get the best of both worlds
I'm happy the way I am.

-Big Daddy O

From The Beat: It sounds like, as much as you joke about it, "needing it" all the time (or needing to feel wanted the way sex can make you feel - temporarily), is actually causing you some problems. Have you been in a position where you ended up getting hurt in the long run, for doing it with the wrong people, or for the wrong reasons? We hope not - we hope you demand and receive the respect you deserve. From others and from yourself.

And I Still Love You

I don't have everything.

As a matter of fact I don't have anything.

Except a dream of a better day.

And you to help me find my way.

Being a man I sure 2 make a mistake.

But to keep you I would do all it takes.

And if it meant my love was really true.

I'd gladly die and watch over you.

I wish you knew how much I cared.

You'd see my love is true by life we'd share.

Even if you changed your mind and soul our love was
through.

I'd want to die continuously cry, still I'd love u.

-Lil' T

From The Beat: Did you have a specific girl in mind when you wrote this? Did she ever get the chance to see the poem? And what did she think of it?

Free My People

They got a lot of my bra's in prison who ain't coming
home

And they main thang (female) then put a block on the
phone

My bra was a young ninja, so I ask how the hell do you
do fo'ty

And he told me you just do it don't think about it
And I told him bra you ain't breaking bread no more in
these streets

That's all a female care for in all them ninja who you
was with

Then left you alone

And he told me the ninja that let you down is the ninja
you love so much.

-Deeske

From The Beat: We're sorry to hear that your boy is suffering the way he is. It sounds like he's keeping his head up the best he can. As for you, did hearing this make you even more determined to stay out of the system - and also to remember that you can't really trust the people you're doin' dirt with. That life is so dirty it gets into people's hearts...

If I Only Would've...

What's popping Beat and Beat readers? I picked this
topic 'cause lot of us do wish ...so here I go.

One day I was posted on the spot, posted with fam, all
of us doing our thang, letting everybody know what it is
and we all on like shhh

But out of nowhere I just up and boogied, left
everybody body on the Island feeling it was the wrong
thing to do. But I did it nonetheless then out of no where
my wifey calls me and asks what I'm doing and where I'm
at. I let her know, and then we get into a personal talk so
me and her choppin' it up for like 30 minutes. Then my
big brotha calls me and tells me I'm seriously needed on
the Island and I hear gun shots in the background so I let
him know I'm on my way, and I click over only to hear my
boo-baby cryin' and saying come home (her house).

But I told her that I couldn't and had something to
do. She wasn't trying to hear it, but I had to, I hung up
and turned my phone off and my car around to go back
to the Island -- only to be in the middle of a shootout war.
But if family calls, I respond, get my brothers and got
outta there.

Finally, I cut my phone back on and had missed three
from wifey, one from my sister, and one from my auntie.
I didn't go home till like two days later. All because I not
only knew, but I felt how mad she was at me.

So I finally caught up to her after school on Friday we
went to take pictures, ate and went to the movies as a way
of apologizing and making it up to her.

But I can't help it our motto is Fam 1st. Females last,
but I still love her so I try to show her that every day. but
now a days you don't have one without the other.

-Lil' Solid

From The Beat: Thanks for sharing this story, we feel like the choices you had to make that day are something a lot of people can relate to. See it seems to us that you can't REALLY put your family first until you are sure you are trying to keep each other out of danger. So long as you're posted, so long as you're doing dirt, so long as you're all trying to get that street money, then your "fam" isn't really watching out for each other. You keep putting each other in danger. As for females last - it works like this. Love first. Who you love and care about is what matters. But if you love them, don't make them suffer, worrying about are you dead or alive. You need to get out of the street, and take whoever you love that you think will go with you. But first, save yourself!

I Can't Get Glad

I'm sittin' in the hall lookin' at the wall waitin' for a
worker to pass me some county draws I'm itchin',

For a release, so I can hit the scene

If you dry ass ninjas know what I mean.

I'm so damn mad I can't get glad,

The judge planning on releasing me to my dad.

-Lila Dee

From The Beat: As much stress as your facing, we do congratulate you on your straight release, and we hope you NEVER COME BACK.

Stressing

What's up Beat I hate bein' in this shhh. I been stressing
all this week 'cause my court coming up.

I want to get out of these walls, I want to be with my
family and my girl, I ain't never coming back to the hall,
this ain't my place to be!!

I miss my money and my mom and my girlfriend and
when I get out I'ma try to find a job a do some with my self
cause I don't want to come back!!

-Roland

From The Beat: We hear you - this is no place for you (or anyone) to be. So now that you know it, you have got to make a plan on how you intend to stay out - for good.

When I Think Of Death...

When I think of death I think of losing my eyes for a split second then opening them on a new life. I agree with the Beat that living on the edge is selling drugs and packing guns.

In my opinion, that leads to a quick death. In funerals I learned that they bring out the real you, and also the best.

-Young Voice

From The Beat: Well at a funeral we're being honest and we're not afraid to hide our pain or sorrow. In our day-to-day lives, we hide it. Why do you think we hide our feelings so much?

Loss of Innocence

How I grow up so fast I see people do shhh I like

So I got that follow I like what they do

So I do the same thing they do

That's how I grew up fast

By looking at people next thing I knew I grew up hella fast

Doing all that when I hit sixteen

People always tell me slow down I want you to stay out of trouble

Boy you a good young man people love you

You need to do the right thing.

-Pp

From The Beat: And when people tell you this, that they love you, that they want you to do the right thing, do you hear them? Or is it so much temptation out there that you don't pay attention? We feel like there's a part 2 to this poem, and we want to hear it!

Drums Are My Anti-Drug

My anti drug is playing the drums. I feel good playing them I can get stress off at the same time.

That is what my anti drug is, for example I got kicked out and went to the center and played their drum set and just stayed there all day and played nonstop for hours.

That is why drums are my anti-drug.

-Ricardo

From The Beat: How does playing the drums make you feel? Is that a good way to relieve your stress whenever you feel like snapping on somebody, or doing something stupid? Is playing your drums a way for you to get away from everything and relax? Who is your favorite drummer? Where did you learn?

Cheese

What makes me smile

Is when I'm in front the crowd going way wild

I feel good when I do me and it's my style

I gets way wild

Make the crowd go right to left, left to right

Seein' my fam bam in front of the spotlight

Seein' my ninjas come up

Stayin' smart as the dump truck

No being stupid give my young ninjas some money

Tell 'em do y'all go to da mall and go buy it all

I smile when my family happy

If you wanna be happy get at me.

-Boe

From The Beat: If you truly feel this way then you know what you have to do. You have to quit all the BS and get your life straight - because do you think it makes your family smile when you come in here?

RIP Stevie

What's up y'all, this is Lil' Bj giving a lil' Beat shout out to my close potna Stevie who was killed at Emery High School about six months ago. Rest In Peace.

-Lil' Bj

From The Beat: Thanks for giving us a chance to remember Stevie in our pages. RIP.

What Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is girls gone wild

Laugh out loud naw but on some real shhh

Makin' money that makes me smile

Even on the pru off that Seagram's gin

Cause when I'm on I know I gone win

And if you a girl you some swipe and make you loud!

-Weezy

From The Beat: What's funny is that we know you, and we know you are always smiling, even if you are going through serious stress. How do you keep your spirits up, and what lies behind the smile?

What's Good Beat?

Well this is your boy Sparks holding it down in camp with my homeboy. Man, we in here stressing and wishing we can be out there with the fam and doin' what we do.

But enough wit' that I just wanted to come through, show some love and respect to all of ya, and let everyone know to keep their heads up in Juvie. Much love from ya boy Sparks.

Rest In Peace all lost homies. See you soon on the other side.

-Sparks

From The Beat: What do you do to help you cope with that stress in here? Do you spend much time making plans for the future? We hope you do, and we hope you do it in a positive way.

My Ladies

What makes me smile is looking at my mom and just knowing that she is still by my side no matter what I'm going through.

To see my little sister doing something positive with her life instead of following all these girls that have no respect for themselves.

What makes me smile is to see my beautiful wifey stay by my side no matter what through thick and thin, and to know and see that she is going to be there for me even if I don't need her to be.

What makes me smile is to know that I can put a smile on each of their faces even when they're feeling low. And to let them know that everything is going to be all right as the day goes.

-Ronnie

From The Beat: Those are all positive things to look forward to. You have all these people by your side sticking by you by thick and thin. You're very lucky that you have that support. You shouldn't be in here. You should be spending time with your mother, sister, and your wifey. Next time think about your family before you decide to make any kind of decision that might put your freedom in jeopardy.

Two Good Books

Me I'm coo' 'bout to let my fellow inmates know about two good books to read, to help you make some better choices, and entertainment for the mind. The first I say is the autobiography by Colton Smith (Former Crip), and The Client by John Grisham yeah just check them out. They some good books. I already read to help pass time and learn a few things instead of rottin' in my cell.

-Lil' T

From The Beat: Thanks for the recommendations Lil' T, we'll take a look at these books too and get back to you on them! What is it that you liked about these books, and are there others you'd suggest?

Hood Life

My mama use to tell me
 Never show the real me
 'Cause if I show the real me
 They gon' wanna kill me
 Dead or alive man ya gonna feel me
 Listen up this is the real me
 This ain't no movie so why you tryna film me
 Why the hell you think I put the ice in my jewelry
 Bright lights in front of me
 Everybody started off as wannabe's
 And now I'm where I wanna be.

-Jesus

From The Beat: Where exactly do you wannabe? Are you telling us that you wanna be in jail? Or do you mean something else by what you said when you said "And now I'm where I wannabe." You said it yourself this ain't no movie. You wasting your time behind bars. Where you should be is outta jail.

My Love For Money

If I got money in my pockets then I'm happy wit' a smile on my face.
 That's why I stay wit' money in my pockets, feel me?
 You gotta go out there and get it. But you got to stay out a jail and be free.

-Lil' Ken-E

From The Beat: One thing you don't say in this piece is how you get your money. Do you ever think about that, and does that make a difference in terms of how you feel about the money in your pockets?

Lady Just Listen

Liking you is easy because you're beautiful
 I got just what you need call me a pharmaceutical
 I don't wanna come between you and your man
 But I can treat you better than he can
 Now say your man ain't treating you like he use to
 I know what you should do
 Call on me now, say your plans ain't working
 Out like they use to
 Things ain't what they use to
 I know what you should do
 Call on me I don't have to say it to your face
 When my pen hit the pad
 I can make you feel like a new lady
 I ain't Weezy but you can call me baby
 Make it last forever like Keith Sweat
 My words on paper take away breath
 One day I'm gonna have my own country
 I'm gonna be the only man there
 So the ladies they gone hunt me
 Ladies just listen I will tell you the true meaning of commitment.

-Young Mari

From The Beat: Where do you get your inspiration? Did you write this for any lady in particular?

Rest In Peace Jeremee

Man this Young Money back in the building. Yeah man I'm through with all my ninjas dying.
 Every time I come home its another one of my patnas dying or being locked up.

-Hoochie

From The Beat: It's enough to make a person break down, but instead we've got to work together to bring peace back to our streets. To end the funerals and the pain.

My Homegirl

What up Beat! It's Dopey from Camp. My home girl passed away a few years ago on December 27, her anniversary is coming up. I don't like Christmas as much as I did because of her loss. I miss her a lot, she was my potna's lady that was the first time I seen him cry. RIP Laura. You'll be missed.

-Dopey

From The Beat: Thanks for sharing this memory with us, we are sorry that you and all her other loved ones had to lose a precious life so young.

Good News

What makes me smile is money, food, and having fun. Also when bad things happen or when things are going bad, good news make me happy. Nothin' but good news excite me the most but good news and money.

I choose money 'cause you could get anything you want depending on how much money you got. Another thing is good news, why I love good news cause bad news make a ninja go crazy, like someone died in yo' family or they tryin' to give you life. But good news could mean nothing but good so that's why I love good news.

-Marcus

From The Beat: Good news is always better than bad news. But no matter what a positive attitude is way better than a negative one. So when you do get some bad news you won't flip out as hard. Money ain't everything though, even though you do need it to live comfortably, it's not worth the risk of your freedom or your life.

My Life

My life is fear
 My life is tears
 My life is funerals
 My life is money
 By any means
 My life is cars
 My life is hard
 My life is girls
 My life is hard times and good times
 My life is staying up to to date.

-Lonnie

From The Beat: Your life is also hope, and dreams... and a chance for a brighter future. When you picture the future you want, what does it look like?

It's Too Deep

It's your homie Smokey coming from these Alaco walls. I ain't really got nothing to say. I got a lot of stuff on my mind but its too deep to talk about. I did want to say this though; I would like to share something that an old associate told me hopefully I get it right:

Life is mathematics. Multiply your sanctuaries and fortunes, respect, and trust. Divide your business associates from family.

Add isolation, temptation, awareness, knowledge, and power of mentality, emotion, physical and communication. Subtract enemies, passion, love, and care for another life. But how far will you go to accomplish all of this. Effort that's all it takes, believe in yourself but have no remorse live how you want to live. Be how you want to be but never forget who you really are!!

-Smokey

From The Beat: Be whatever you want to be, but be yourself! You can't be something that you ain't. You can't pretend to be anything. This life is all about being real, with the people who you care for, and real to yourself. You are not here to impress no one. This is your life, you call the shots!

Rest In Peace Doodie

Man they took my lil' bra out the game. I just seem my bra and now he's gone I hate the life we live. I love and miss you lil' bra.

-Hoochie

From The Beat: We hate the life you live too - there's too much pain and suffering in it. We also believe that it's possible to get away from that life, if you are really committed to change. Could you be one of the people who gets away? We hope so!

I Am Tough

I am tough because I said so,
I am tough because I know I can,
I am tough because I'm the man,
I am tough because I fear no man,
I am tough because is in my blood,
I am tough because I know I'm tough,
But you know what I'm also smart,
I am smart because I know I am and I go to school

-Big Head

From The Beat: These are fighting words, words you can march to in your mind when you are fighting for your education, your job, your future in this nation as a first class citizen. That's better than toughness, that is true strength!

What Makes You Smile

The things that makes me smile is my mom, dad, and family because my mom and dad made my life, and without them I wouldn't be alive right now.

The other reason why that makes me smile is my family. My family makes me smile because if I needed something they would be there to help me or buy something if I needed. So that's what makes me smile. Things that makes me smile is that if some one out there cares and loves me.

-Alex

From The Beat: Those are all positive things to smile about. Family is very important. We bet we know something that would make your family smile, and that's you getting out of juvenile hall and staying out of trouble.

What Makes You Smile

What makes me smile is a lot of things. Even though I'm in juvenile hall I still like to smile. I think you always got something to smile about. I smile just because God wakes me up everyday and that's something to smile about. Even though I'm in here I'm around someone that I love my lil' bra my blood and that just give me something to smile about everyday that keep me going.

Even if you are locked up you should be glad just to have something to eat everyday and somewhere to rest your head because it could be worst. A lot people don't have that. Yes smiling makes me feel good it makes me feel better about myself then being mad don't you think.

When I help my mom out with the family I know that it brings a big smile to her face but when I act up I know that don't help too much with a smile. There has been a lot of times when I smile and it's not good.

I got into this fight one time and beat this boy up that brought a smile to my face but that's all I can think of right now so all right.

-Lil' Midnight

From The Beat: There are plenty of things that we all should smile about. And you're right we need to be grateful for the fact that we have food and shelter. There are people on other parts of the Earth starving. So we all need to kick back and smile and be thankful for the shhh we have.

Stuff on My Mind

So many stuff on my mind while I'm doing time,
Stressed out, with no peace in my heart
My mind continues to sparks anyway
Seems like it's Independence Day
Filled with glory with no made up story
I am the one not the other
I'm gonna make it rain so grab your umbrella
I'm beasting it out like Godzilla
Everything I says it's a fact
Never putting up an act
An' still no love for a cat.

-Big Head

From The Beat: It's good to see you in The Beat again/dropping rhymes like steel with a pencil or a pen/but these 12 lines are just not enough/next time double it, planned out or off the cuff.

No Anti Drug

Nowadays most teens smoke weed and it's easy to find someone who sell it. School is another place where people smoke and sell weed. Weed is a drug that I use. I been smoking weed for a long time. The good part about smoking weed is that it makes you relax and make everything funny to you, but the bad part about smoking weed is that it makes you tired and it kills your brain cells and it become harder for you to think, another fact on smoking weed is that you can't overdose.

-Lil' Dre

From The Beat: So what is your anti-drug? What can you do to get a natural high? Is there anything else you can do to help you relax besides smoking weed?

What Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is when me and my family is having a great time and we have laughs and smiles, like when we go to places together like a family. What makes me smile is my girl when we get together we are having a good time, like I take her to the movies and watch a movie it makes me smile having fun with a love one.

Why is my life so messed up? Why am I so bad? why I have to be so dumb? Why I have to smoke so much weed? Why? Why do I have to serve so much time? Why?

-Baby Joker

From The Beat: You can answer the why questions, we know you have answers, and if you want to correct them you will!!

Where I Am

I'm in jail all in these cells
And it feels like hell wishing I can get bailed
And all I can do is think of my family
But all I can do is blame me
Not the people in the street
Not the people in the beat
And I hate the heat
The heat that I'm in
But jail is like my twin
'Cause I can't stop coming back
And all I can do is slack
But on outs I'm a mack on the map
And I stay wit' a girl on my lap
But I wish I can rap and re-feel destiny so you can wish
You can be me.

-B

From The Beat: You don't have to keep blaming yourself kid. You made a couple of mistakes. Now you gotta bounce back. Everybody is gonna slip up and make mistakes. But it's how you gonna pick yourself back up that's gonna determine how much heart you have.

I'm Back

Man, I been in here for more than a year now, and dey 'bout to send me to a grouper. I but I gotta wait. Dey be playin' wit' me. 33rd said they accepted, then they said I'm not. Now, I don't know how, but if I don't get out, I might get a home pass for Xmas.

A'ight Beat, I'm gone.

-Coo B

From The Beat: We hope you got your home pass. But we have to keep it real. When we read "they playin' me," we have to wonder just how "you" are part of the "they"...

Home Cooked Food

If I would put any kind of food in here, it would have to be Mom's home cooked food. What I like about Mom's Puerto Rican food is that it's unique. I think it's the best tasting food.

If I had a chance, that's what kind of food I'd rather have than that juvenile hall food.

-Lope

From The Beat: We'd love to taste some of that home-cooked food. Do you cook?

Pumpin' Iron Is My Anti-Drug

My anti-drug up here is pumpin' iron, homie! Ha ha. Naw, but fo' reals, lifting weights helps relieve a lot of the stress and anger I've got, plus I'm just gettin' ready to go back to the war zone!

I'm almost done wit' this program! This year up here went by quick. This time wasn't shhh! I'm eighteen already, so next stop is the 7th floor at 850 (San Francisco County Jail,) feel me? All right, that's it for me, Beat. Will see if you publish my piece, 'cause you rarely do. All right, then. Late.

-Smokey

From The Beat: Pumping iron is terrific for your health and spirits! Plus you'll look all buff and handsome and feel great! But are you also taking a good look at what on the outs is causing your stress and anger? Do you want to deal with it, because it's righteous, or are you going to let it sabotage you so badly that you'll end up in 850 or worse? You already know what being incarcerated feels like. Why don't you challenge yourself right now and make sure that once you're back on the outs, you'll stay free, no matter what? Get yourself a brand new life?

Get Over

My cousin got shot. Now my cousin can't walk. He can't see me, can't talk. He's dead!

I don't even drink, but when I got the news, I took a bottle of Patron to the head, and ever since that happened, I feel like I can't stay sober. I just gotta get over 'cause, dog, I'm a soulja. It's killin' me 'cause we was younger. That was like one of my favorite cousins and he wasn't an innocent bystander. Yeah, he was out there thuggin', but that's not the point. Why they had to take my fam? You'll never know how upset I am. And I was in jail, so I missed the funeral.

RIP Big Cousin Dexter.

-Butta

From The Beat: When you say we'll never know how upset you are at losing your loved one, we want you to think about the fact that everyone who loses someone close to them feels the same as you feel about your cousin. It is one tragedy that so many of you have to feel the pain of loss — permanent loss — at your age. But is also a tragedy that so many of us feel that only our pain counts, and that when we inflict that pain on others, it's somehow okay. When we finally understand that the love we have for our families is the same as the love all people have for their families, and the pain we feel when they pass is identical to the pain everyone feels about losing their loved ones, then maybe we can learn to live together.

How I'm Feelin'

Wha's good wit da Beat? Dis DreBoelow. Man, I can[t wait ta see wha's good wit' da homies. Da's how I'm feelin'.

God Makes Me Smile

God woke me up today. That's what we should all smile about. Forget all the troubles.

-Stephaun

From The Beat: Now that you are awake, what will change in your life?

Conflicts

What's poppin' wit' da Beat? Me, shhh, same ol' me. I've been thinkin' 'bout a lot, and everything. I just lost my 707, and I'm supposed to have court downtown in a few weeks.

I really don't give a rat's ass about me losing this shhh. I just don't want to go to the pen to do hella time, 'cause it won't be fun. But I can do the time 'cause I did the crime. But I don't give a damn. I'm already 18 years old and I don't care about juvenile. My PO ugly ass could drop the charges, but she don't want to.

I don't care about the judge. The DA ain't showing no love. I hate the police. They snakes.

-Latin King

From The Beat: Of course, we had to take out that final threatening sentence... We're sorry you lost your 707. We think the court made a big mistake. When you say you don't care about any of the people who now control your life, you're saying you don't care about yourself. And that tells us you're not an adult yet, whatever the court says you are.

Mom Makes Me Smile

My mom makes me smile. She's always there for me when I'm down or up, it don't matter. When she be coming to see me, I always got a smile when I see her, and she got one too. And I ain't trying to sound like no mama boy, but she always been there fa yo' boy, and I love her for that.

They say what makes you smile makes you cry, but not Moms. She got my back fo' real, and whenever she need me, I got to the same way. So that's what it be like when I smile.

-James

From The Beat: You're so lucky to have a mom that not only loves you, but stands by you when you need her the most. Of course, that's why you should be home with her right now. Next time you're out, remember that she needs you beside her more than you need to be anywhere else. Don't you think she deserves it?

If My Uncle Was Alive

What would make me smile is to be able to see my uncle Way who died in August of 2005 at Nation's restaurant in El Cerrito. 100% RIP Way Out.

-Manorism

From The Beat: If we could only bring those who have passed back into our lives, we would all be smiling.

Putting A Smile On My Face

What's good with The Beat? I just want to tell you something that makes me smile. It's when I see my mom and my sister when I go to a family visit. That's what makes me smile, when I see my family and my girlfriend.

But a song that I like to hear is Lil' Wayne. He be saying some real shhh that gets me in the mood and puts a smile on my face.

-Acie

From The Beat: What is it about Lil' Wayne's music and lyrics that puts that smile on your face?

My Unborn Baby Brings Me Joy

It's crazy how something that you've never seen or heard can bring so much happiness to my life, I can feel it kick, I can hear its heart beat and I know it's there depending on me to eat right and take care of myself, 'cause when I'm happy my baby's happy. So my baby is what makes me smile. Every time I think of my baby coming, I smile. I can wait for it to come.

-Kristina

From The Beat: Having a baby means you have to make a lot of changes in your life. You no longer come first, and that means you must stop doing the things that let the system take your freedom. If you keep doing those things, it will only show the world that you love something more than your baby! Good luck!

Three Topics In One

I smile when the CO tell me I'm being released.

My anti-drug us watching TV, C.S.I & Law & Order because I want to be a defense attorney so I try to cram all the legal terminology as much as I can.

I want Panda Express. I want some sweet & sour pork, some potstickers, fried rice and chowmein.

-Mercedes

From The Beat: Mercedes, we can tell that you can write, even from this small sample. But The Beat doesn't want you to write about all three topics. When you do that, all you can give us is a sentence or two, and that doesn't tell us anything. Next time, please choose just one topic to write about, and tell us as much as you can about that one topic.

Mom Makes Me Smile

Someone who always makes me smile is my mom. Since I've been in here, all I could think about was her and one of my good friends. I've realized all I think about is what I did wrong.

I love my mom so much, and I regret doing everything wrong and not listening to everyone. I miss all my friends, and all I could do is cry because I know instead of being free, I'm stuck between four walls every day. And when I'm in here all I wanna do is give my mom a huge hug. I wanna give one of my friends a hug. I miss everyone so much and now I know what not to do.

-Unsigned

From The Beat: Next time, don't forget to put your Beat name on what you write. And next time you're out, remember how much you miss (and owe) your mom. Knowing what not to do is critical, but not enough. Now you have to put your knowledge into practice.

You Put A Smile On My Face...

Edward, Jr.

My man,

My boyfriend. My best friend. My life.

My love,

Just the thought of you makes me smile.

All the good times we've shared, it all still

Makes me feel special.

Just knowing that I'm part of your life, brings

So much happiness to this world.

Our kisses we share

Are so magical.

Your smile is so contagious.

You don't ever fail to make my day.

Baby, I miss you so much right now.

I will not stop loving you, ever.

-Angelique

From The Beat: It's always nice to have someone to love. But when you have someone like this, why would you risk losing it by doing whatever it was that brought you here? Sounds like there was something you loved even more than him, at least at that moment...

Family

My family is what made me happy even though at times they get on my nerves. My family is my everything.

-Zené

From The Beat: This tells us almost nothing. You can do much better. If all you can produce in one hour is two sentences about something that is your "everything," you haven't really told us anything at all. Next time, we want much more before we'll publish. For example, if your family is your everything, as you write, then why did you give it all away by giving the system the power to take you from them?

Anti-Drug

Well yeah, I used to love getting high smoking weed. Not drinking. I used to always love to get high. As soon as I got up I would think about hittin' the blunt. I used to be like, "Forget it! I need a blunt." I haven't smoked for a minute though. Even before I got here I haven't hit a blunt ever since a couple of months back.

I ain't no drug addict, but now my ass is getting sent to a rehab for adults 'cause I ain't got accepted to the youth rehab. For the fact I'm 18 already. It's good though. I'm going to be there for a minute, probably two years. It's all good though, just got to keep staying solid as usual, stay strong, and always keep my head up. Same for all the homies that are here doin' time. Just keep y'all head.

-Monstrita

From The Beat: Why did you decide to stop hitting that blunt when you were free? How did you do it? Now that you have some clean time, you should build on that. Take advantage of whatever the program offers.

Gumbo And Jumbalaya

Right now I have a taste for some Gumbo. When I get out I have to go out the state so I don't know what I will want, probably just some pepperoni pizza on the plane.

As for the Hall menu, if they can't make the gumbo they should at least consider Jumbalaya. When I'm at home, I loved making my specialty shrimp alfredo with broccoli on the side, with French rolls. The only thing I miss out of my mom's cooking is her deep fried chicken and hot water corn bread. I'ma miss all of the good food California have so I hope the state I'm going to will too. I'll be back in five months.

-Sabrina

From The Beat: We don't know which plane you'll be on, but if you find pepperoni pizza on board, let us know! We have to tell you that this piece made us hungry both for your special shrimp alfredo, and for your mom's fried chicken and corn bread. Which state will you be going to?

My Life

Wha's up Beat Within? This is young Racs, I'm just in the Halls just waiting for the good news to say when I'm getting out. I'm looking forward to this day. I'm really trying to get a job and just be with my family, because this is what I really want for my life. I want to just spend time with my family and be with them during holidays, like the special holidays like Christmas or my mom's birthday, because I really ain't trying to be locked up during this holiday.

I will be really frustrated, but that ain't really going to happen because they really are going to give me another chance. I just got to appreciate my freedom being out of jail.

Peace out Beat Within Late!

-Young Racs

From The Beat: It's a sign of adulthood to know what is truly important in our lives. Family will be there for you when others have lost their importance. You should be there with them, too!

When Will Our War(s) End?

When will the war be over? I ask when will we stop killing innocent people for oil? When Barack Obama become the first black President of the United States. When will our current President, Georgia, learn some common sense? When will the government stop being a big conspiracy and actually work toward world peace and security?

When will I be free from this oppression?

-Mercedes

From The Beat: Of course, we can't be sure that Obama will be the next President, and we're not sure how soon the war in Iraq will end even if he is elected. We hope so. But the only war you can really do anything about is the war that keeps you locked up. So, while we applaud you for taking an interest in national politics, we really want you to focus your attention on that final question because you have a good deal to say in the matter of when you'll be free from this oppression...

Talking To Mom Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is my mom when she comes in here and talks to me. Her presence makes me smile and makes me happy. The other thing that makes me smile is talking on the phone. When I talk to my brothers, my mom, my cousins, and my girl I just feel this great bliss come over me.

Talking and laughing with them just makes me forget my problems. They make my problems become oblivious to me. When I see my mom or when I talk on the phone, no one can ever encroach on my feelings.

-Lil' Roach

From The Beat: The way we read this, you'd really be smiling all the time if you were with your mom where you belong. So the question is, when you get back there, will you be able to stay there? What will you have to change for this to happen? (By the way, just one English correction: Problems cannot become oblivious to you. Instead, you are oblivious to your problems when you're laughing with your mom.)

Family Makes Me Smile

My Grams and my Pops makes me smile when they come visit me in YGC. When they release me from Juvenile Hall. When I'm ova. When people fight and someone gets whopped or dropped. When Grams cooks a hot plate for me.

-Lil' Unknown

From The Beat: Those are a lot of things to smile about. What can you do for all of them that would make them smile?

Fast Food

When I leave, I will go to KFC for some chicken, McDonald's for a Big Mac, and #1 King. While in here, you only could dream of some good food. Life in here is no joke. Your days go by so slow, you wish you could sleep your day away. Being in jail is some people's worst nightmare, and for others, it's all they have. I guess it's how you look at it.

-Baby Dimples

From The Beat: You're right, jail is no joke. So tell us, how do you look at it? Is it your worst nightmare? If so, how do you plan to wake up and stay out of it?

Momma's Cooking Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is when my momma makes me steak tacos for my birthday and then lets me bring all of my friends over and the girls to party.

-Lalo

From The Beat: That's fine, Lalo, but is this all you could squeeze out in a one-hour workshop? Couldn't you throw in some details about the food, the birthday party, the girls?

Making Me Laugh

When I'm mad or sad, there's always something that can find it's way in make me laugh, if it's watchin' my niece and nephew do something silly, or hangin' out wit' my goons, or wit' my boyfriend chillin'. I can't never stay mad too long 'cause my niece and nephew are lil' cartoons and my boyfriend is goofy as can be.

-Jacqueela

From The Beat: We hope you think about just how much your lil' niece and nephew need you, because we know you weren't thinking of them when you did whatever it was that let them separate you. Maybe it's time to think of what others in your life need, and what you have to sacrifice in order to give it to them.

What Makes Me Smile?

If I am sad or really mad and call my grammy and tell her how my day went and tell her what is bothering me, she would always say something stupid or funny or talk about somebody in a bad way and make me laugh and smile. After that I would forget about the whole bad day and go on like nothing bad ever happened that day. That's why I love my grammy so much because she can always make me smile no matter what.

-Cindy

From The Beat: Your grammy has a wonderful gift. Now, what gift can you give her that she wants most from you? We think it's staying free that she wants for you. Can you give her that?

My Best Friend

My best friend makes me happy because I go to his house and we be playing at his house. I can't wait til I get out because I hope I can go home and not a group home.

-No Name

From The Beat: Next time, you can write more than this! Also, next time don't forget to put your Beat name on what you write!

Good Case Manager

The people that helped is my case manager called Delivin. Every time when I get into trouble he is always there to help me out of the situation like going to juvenile hall. When I really do something wrong, he will always be there for me and support me. He always tries to give me positive ideas like going to school and going home for curfew. So this is for the case manager that helped me.

-Lil' T

From The Beat: It's really nice to thank someone who goes out of their way to help. But, of course, you know even before we say it that the best thanks you could give would be to stay out of the kind of trouble that leads you here. That's the thanks he's looking for.

I'm Gonna Be Smart

Being in jail is weak 'cause there's nothing to do. I've been in and out of jail, and now I'm thinking about this bullshhhh. I stay in my room thinking about all the stuff I could be doing. But at the same time, I would've have been up to no good.

I would've been kickin it on the block with the homies. Yeah, I do want to do that, because that's what I do. This time I'm gonna be smart about my shhh. I'm going to do my program and get out of probation. After that I'ma do what I do best and go back to the block.

-Weasel L

From The Beat: We hope that by the time you finish your program and are off probation, you will see that there's no way to go back to the block and "be smart..." By then, we hope you'll see that the block is a ticket to places like this, or worse. We pray that you see it before you experience it first hand...

What Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is my goons. They just do because when no one else is there, they is no matter what, especially my favorite brother Nana. I miss dat child to death. When he's out here, we're together every day.

Also, I always make myself smile. I always smile at the haters. I smile when good things happen to me. I smile when I see Beamer (ha ha). I really do though. I know he smile when he see me, a big smile (ha ha). I will smile big when I get out of here. I'm waitin' on my mama to come get me.

-Kamay

Form The Beat: We'll smile when you get out of here, too. And we'll smile even more if you find a way to stay out of here!

Seeing My Son Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is when I see my son. When he cries, smiles, laughs, crawls — the simple things he does makes me smile. And when he goes to me and I pick him up when I get home.

-Young Drew

From The Beat: By bringing a son into the world, you made a kind of promise that you would be there for him. That's what fathers do. It's easy to see how he could put a smile on your face. What do you plan to do (and to stop doing) so that you can put a smile on his face?

What Makes Me Smile? Family

My family makes me smile, just because they're with me. Because when I'm with them, I forget about every bad in my life. I play with my lil' brother and lil' sister. They always make everything better. My beautiful mom, she can make anything happy and joyful. Even when I'm in jail, she makes me smile... but at the same time cry. The love coming from them, bottom line, makes me smile.

-Arturo

From The Beat: What do you think would your beautiful mom and siblings smile? We think having you home with them, where you belong, would put a huge smile on al their faces — especially if you found a way never to lose your freedom again! It sounds like it's time for you do to something for them to make them smile!

The Anti-Drug

The healthy habit or action that makes me feel good are girls. All types of girls, like Latinas, white girls, Asian girls. I try to get to know them more once I meet them because some of the things they are interesting.

-Clavo

From The Beat: Well, at least you'll never run out of girls, so you'll always have your chance to feel good. But what would have made this a more interesting piece is if you had shared some of those "interesting things" that you've learned from your girls.

My Anti-Drug

The only thing I could think of (that makes me smile) is sex. It's healthy and good for me all-around. Being around girls is healthy and enjoyable, but it gets better when you're under the influence. To me it seems that I enjoy sex better when I'm drunk or high, but it's usually preceded and followed by using drugs. To me, that's the best way to go.

-Birdman

From The Beat: If you use alcohol or drugs to enhance sex, doesn't sex become another addiction? Do you usually care about the woman you're with, when you make love with her? Or is getting high or drunk a means of obliterating what you're doing, because your whole heart isn't into this lady? What about her? How does your being partially wasted affect her being intimate with you? Or don't you care about her?

My Future

When I get out, I want to get my brain on the right track for the future, my kids or just for my family not to be in the gutta. I'll like to go to Cal and play football, go pro and make it somewhere with my life, so I don't have to keep worrying about police or me getting shot or whatever out there.

-Weezey

From The Beat: We like where your head is. Before you can go to Cal, you have to finish high school with good grades. How are you doing in that department?

My Mom Brings A Smile

The person who makes me smile is my mom. Every time I see her she brings a smile on my face. She just makes me so happy every time I see her. Back then I always took her for granted, but now I realize that she's not always going to be there and how important she is to me. So every time I get to spend time with her with her I'm going to cherish every second of it. I love her so much.

-Crow

From The Beat: It's too bad it took being taken from her to realize just how important she is to you, and just how much you owe her. Will you be able to remember this when you're free to make your own choices again?

Being Locked up Sucks!

Being with my family and not between four walls makes me happier than anything else in the whole world. I love Mom more than the world.

-Angelo

From The Beat: You love your mom more than the world, but you let the world lure you into activity that allowed the system to take you away from her. Next time, show her how much you love her by sacrificing some of what you like to do in order to stay with her.

We Do Time

Well, this your boy V-Guttah still in here. I ain't trippin' that I'm in here, but the only thing that makes me in a rush to get out is my family and my female. But other than that, I ain't trippin' 'cause I do time, time don't do me, you feel me.

To hell with the system! They ain't shhh! I'm way bigger than them. They ain't got shhh on me. Shout out to all my bruhs... And remember, we do time, time don't do us.

-V-Guttah

From The Beat: Frankly, we don't know what you mean when you say you do time but it doesn't do you. Can you explain that to us? Wouldn't you be a lot better off if you chose a third alternative, which is not to put yourself in a situation where you have to argue that you're doing the time instead of it doing you?

Changing My Life

Yeah, right. What you think? I'm a sucka? You got the game twisted. I'm bargin' fo' life, homie. To all the homies gettin' locked up, changin' y'all lives, I know what y'all going through. Y'all weak-minded—can't help but be a sucka. I ain't got no problem, but keep the 'hood out yo' mouth if you ain't bargin' no mo'. I always keep (my) code.

-Menace

From The Beat: If others are trying to build another life for themselves, why does that make them weak minded? Why don't you encourage them? Be happy for them? Maybe they're tired of the drama, tragedy and sadness of the streets. It takes way more courage to create a new life than just revert to the life you already know.

My Girl Makes Me Smile

Someone who make me smile is my girl. When I kick it with her, nothing don't even matter, even if I in a bad mood. She brings my spirit up automatically. Just being with her or talking to her on the phone makes me happy.

I trust her because she been there for me while the ups and downs. She was there standing by my side when the money wasn't there, feel me. She hold me down, anywhere, any time. And I do the same for her, fo' real.

-Uup

From The Beat: We hope you both find ways to hold the other down enough to keep yourselves out of jail! Freedom is precious, especially when you have another person to share it with. Don't throw it away!

Listen

Got da weapon on my waist just in case I run into dese ninjas who be holdin' dey gone kill me. Gotta watch my back 24/7. don't know who could be comin'.

Got a sign from God, but it was in a negative way. He sent two ninjas ta jump me here. Ninjas laughin', but da shhh ain't funny. I blamed God then, but now I see what goes around comes around.

-Quan

From The Beat: What do you think a sign from God should look like? How would you know that sign if you saw it? Is it possible you've already got your sign, but you've chosen to ignore it? Having to live with one eye over your shoulder 24/7 may just be the sign you say you're looking for: a big Stop Sign.

God, Lead My Way

God, lead my way each day as I fall on my knees to you, as I pray God you lead my way.

When my mind sometimes goes black and you bless me with the will to think, God, you lead my way.

When I am in need for some spiritual direction, you provide to me your Godly protection.

God, you lead my way as the spiritual light shines. As I search for the truth, you is what I will find. God, you lead my way and treat me fair, always letting me know you will be there.

God, lead my way, because I trust in you.

God, lead my way and allow me to be still and patient.

God, lead my way as you teach me the value of prayer.

God, you lead my way as you free me out of bondage of darkness.

God, you lead my way as you help me see the plan you have for my life. It is unfolding right before my eyes.

God, you lead my way when I do take the time out to search the scripture for a better understanding of the right way.

-Lil' Morro

From The Beat: What a beautiful prayer. If you want, why don't you write for The Beat a story about how you came to trust God? Did you always? What will your life be like when you're free again? Does God guide you when you're on the outs? Do you think the lord has a purpose for everybody's life? If so, what is God's purpose for your life? Do you like that purpose? What do you hope your life will become? How will you achieve it?

On Getting Out

I just want to get out. When I get out, I'm going to stone out. I want to go home and play games with my brother, and go to the block with my big brother, and call my girl. Then I'm going to get some good food from my mom.

-AC

From The Beat: Besides getting with your brother, your girl, and a good meal, do you see yourself making any changes in how you live? If not, you should expect the same consequences for the same actions... If you do plan to make some changes, what kind of changes would they be?

Close To Graduation

What's up Beat? Well, I'm still here in this hole... Thought I was getting out, but they was talking 'bout I need ta do a certain amount of days. I already been here like 75 days...

Well, I'ma just knock this down and you'll never hear from me again. I got to see my brother today. He's hella big now. I also found out that I am only five credits away from graduating, but I can't graduate 'cause I need driver's ed, and they don't got that here. So as soon s I get out, I'll have my diploma.

Well, that's all I gotta say.

-Muslim Warrior

From The Beat: We wish you nothing but good luck. Yes, get out and get your diploma, and watch your brother grow. We'd love to see you again — only NOT HERE!

A Word With Myself

It may be easy to do good, but I choose differently. I try to be positive, but always seem to be negative. So why do I do what I do when I know its wrong? Because I gotta do what I gotta do to get what I gotta get done. Simple as that. But when I look at it, that's why I'm at where I'm at. Jail's another word for hell. Was it really something I had to do? No, but it was my decision and my opinions of what I had to do, so I did it

-Fed-Up Beam

From The Beat: You begin by saying that it may be easy to do good, but we don't think that's necessarily true. We think it's easier for you to keep doing what you've always done (much of which isn't good) than to change up, even when you know that change will bring you better dividends than what your choices have delivered so far. If jail's another word for hell, and you believe you have no choice but to continue down the path you've been traveling, then expect a lot more hell.

My Auntie And Cousin Make Me Smile

What makes me smile is when I'm with my cousin Jeanette and my Auntie Ada because they hella cool and funny. They always put a smile on my face when I'm with them 'cause they never put me down.

Why they make me smile is because my aunt be taking me places with her and she be giving me money. Every time I'm with her she makes me laugh 'cause she be saying some hilarious stuff.

Well, I'm done, Beat. This be Youngsta coming from Unit 6. A'ight then. Late.

-Michael

From The Beat: Is your Auntie Ada your mom's sister or your dad's? What kinds of hilarious things does she say that make you laugh? Do you ever make her laugh? How?

Smile

What makes me smile is knowin' that it gets the other person mad, like sometimes these suckers be talkin', but not actin', and when you smile or laugh at 'em, it just get them madder. To me, that's the funniest part, knowin' that they're gettin' mad as hell, but they still ain't gon' do nothin'. Then they wanna get mad and start talkin' shhh, and I just act sarcastic and be, like, "Aright" and "Swear to God?" and they just get madder. They're just a joke to me, wasting all that time, words, and breath for nothin'.

-Birdman

From The Beat: Laughing at someone who's trying to get to you or get over on you is one way to deal with that person. It's like you mirror to him what he's trying to do to you, and puts his mess in his own face. He'll learn not to bother messing with you again, and, hopefully, anybody else.

To Smile

There are three things that make me smile the most.

The first thing that makes me smile is when my three brothers and I are together. It makes me smile because they're always running around my grandma's house and we always do the funniest stuff.

The second thing that makes me smile is when my grandma is proud of me. It makes me smile because I know when I'm happy and doing good then that means that she is happy.

The last thing that makes me smile is when I'm with my friends. It makes me smile because I know I can relax and be myself, because we do a lot of fun stuff. Those are the three things that make me smile the most.

-Corina

From The Beat: And those are good things to smile about. Love of family and of friends... very good reasons to work hard on the reasons you're separated from them.

The Rest of Time

Sitting here in this cold dark room
the only thing running through my mind is how I want
to be with you
when I first laid eyes on you
I thought dang look at that cutie
I stopped looked up and thanked God for blessing me
with your beauty
as I got to know you I realized we were meant to be.
I was ready to ask you will you be mine for the rest of
the time, as the days go by.

-Dopey

From The Beat: Thoughts of loved ones often sustain people who are locked-up. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry says that true love is not two people gazing at each other, but two people looking in the same direction. How might love help you stay out of here? How might you and your lady assist you in another kind of life?

Spittin' Ain't Easy

Spittin' ain't easy. Always comin' with them fake old lines. Tryin' to get at us girls for, y'all, it ain't easy. Say the same thang we have, everyday, all day. Ain't nothing changed. All ninjas in the Bay are the same. Tryin' to run up 'cause she got a big butt don't phase you. All you want to do is cut. Spittin' ain't easy these days.

-Anna

From The Beat: We're glad you know the difference between a fake line and the real thing. There's enough phony stuff in the world. But we do have control over our choice of partners. It's a choice we should make carefully.

What makes me smile!

Q-vole Beat. It's your girl Kristina - yep - back again. (Not happy about that). I'm here to talk about three people that make me smile! The first two are my son (two) and my daughter (one). These are the two people in the world that make me smile, no matter what. The other person is the father of my babies. We have been together for five years and he's been there through thick and thin. These are three things that make me smile!

Keep ya heads up and have faith. Don't let anything bring you down. Much love!

-Kristina

From The Beat: You belong at home, with your family. What will it take to deal with the issues that bring you to the hall? If being separated from the people you love most, the people who make you smile, what will get you to straighten up? Time for some very serious reflection, Kristina.

Little Sister

The thing that makes me smile is when I look at my little sister's picture even though I am not with her physically but I am with her mentally and that's what puts a smile on my face everyday even on my worst days her picture puts a smile on my face.

-Lt

From The Beat: Relationships with siblings can often be the most meaningful relationships. Thank you for sharing your feelings for your little sister.

Tired

I'm tired of this place!!

I'm tired of waking up to the sound of keys.

I'm tired of going to this school that doesn't teach you shhh.

I'm tired of this crappy food every day.

I'm tired of doing the same old shhh activity

I'm tired of being told when to shower.

I'm tired of all this bullshhhh that goes on in this place.

I'm tired of me coming back to this place.

I'm tired of making my mom sad.

I'm tired of disappointing my family 'cause of my actions.

I'm tired of being tired.

Better get my shhh straight out before I end up being tired of my life.

-Pl

From The Beat: Being tired can be a motivation. When we're our lowest, we got no where else to go but up, right? Check out Phat Boi's piece in the next issue: he makes the point that many of us declare that we're going straight, going to change, but we go back to our old ways. Why is that? How tired do we need to be?

Trusting Them

It's hella hard to trust... even friends and people you love. Sure, hella people been hurt by them. So I had a man and I thought he would be there for me. But I found out he cheated and lied.. Found out by his sis. She thought we broke up. Hella loved him. Now I don't. He screwed up. Hopefully fools, and by fools I mean guys, and GIRLS, don't screw around with trust. It hurts. I ain't gonna love anybody else if the man I have fails me 'cause the second kiss is enough for tryin'. So GIRLS and guys - don't mess with trust.

-Jazmin

From The Beat: Have you ever betrayed a trust? We are all fallible. (If you don't know that word, look it up.) But we agree with you on the importance of trust. Without trust, our personal worlds would collapse. The surest way to surround yourself with trustworthy people is to be a trustworthy person yourself.

His Smile

The one thing that could make me smile, under any circumstance would be my boyfriend. The thought of him warms my heart.

Being here and away from him is so hard.

But getting mail from him and talking on the phone with him

makes my day all that much better.

Even when I close my eyes I can see his face and that makes me feel secure.

I can't wait to get out back to him.

It's been the best year I've had in a while and it's all because he's been in my life.

-Av

From The Beat: All the reason to get out this system and live a life free of trouble. Can you do it? How bad do you want your freedom?

Without You

Babe without you daddy's heart is always peeling.
That's why in this poem I'm confessing a feeling.

To you babe the one I care for and love.

My love for you is as beautiful as a white dove.
I know we tried it in the past and it didn't succeed.
Your heart is what I broke forever it eternally bleeds.

Now I'm trying to fix the cruel mistake of the past.
This is a new start new love that will always last.

Now I must grasp onto you and never let go
This is a love poem for you girl not a gangsta flow.
I'm confessing a true feeling I have no bull anymore

I love you baby girl.

Vanessa I hope you know that daddy's a criminal.
No matter what my love and life is subliminal.

Either I'm in or out gone away or dead.

I'll always love you unconditionally that's all I said.
When I express my love and life its hard for me to do.
'Cause I've always been told if you fall in love you're a fool.

But I'm giving this crazy falling love try.

No more broken hearts no more tears to cry.

Don't ask me why I'm giving my love to you girl.
That's an unanswerable question I can't answer in this world

Well my love I hope my words are soothing and healing
But t you Bam-Bam is confessing a true feeling
I love you baby girl.

-Bam Bam

From The Beat: Thanks for having the courage to love. Loving unconditionally is truly difficult for most people: we'd prefer to control others and guard our heart. If you break free of these things, how much better love could be!

Smiles

I get to smile everyday. I have at least 30 people who can make me smile. At least one person a day can make me smile. This is why I enjoy coming to work. There's at least one minor that can make me smile or laugh by what they say or do. They bring me entertainment. I don't think that I'd want another job. From one day to the next, it's never the same. Maybe I was this way when I was younger, but I doubt that. I think it has to do with the experiences that they've had and been through. I guess it's pretty sad when you think about it because for the several years that I've been here, these kids – instead of being out enjoying life and being a teenager – they will be here understanding me.

-Ravings of a Madman

From The Beat: Well, we are sure they appreciate your smiles and kindness. It seems you are doing your job well if you can relate and smile with the people you work with. Keep up the excellent work.

My Daughter's Picture

What makes me smile well the thing that makes me smile the most is when I'm in my room and I look at my daughter's picture. I mean I can't wait 'till I get out and look at her and hold her and kiss her some and something else that makes me smile is my lady I mean by now she's mad because I'm here and she needs me out there right now but once I get out I have to do wat I have to do and be with my family. Well I got to go for now, 'till next time.

-G

From The Beat: Supporting our family can be the greatest drive. Too many people behind bars wish they could be better parents and be there for their kids. Wonder what a lifer would have to say about his early days and what he would have done differently.

Family of Twelve

What makes me smile is everything to me. I've got twelve brothers and sisters, and five sisters, and seven brothers. I love my family, because that I miss them. Being locked up in this place is a beech my family makes me happy. That's all I got.

-Family Guy

From The Beat: The love you feel for your family is not shared by all. Not everyone has a family to miss, or cares to miss their family. What do you think it means for your family when you're gone?

What Makes Me Smile

Well what's up Beat? Today I am going to talk about what makes me smile. The thing that makes me smile is when I make my mom proud. As you can see I am not making my mom proud, but don't trip about it Beat because this time when I come out I am going to do my best to stay out of this place. Because I have been doing some thinking and let's put it this way I can't be a chef if I don't stay out of this place, right?

Plus that's when I know my mom will be proud of me if she can finally trust her own boy, que-no? Well Beat I guess this is it, alrato, for now.

-Pl

From The Beat: Doing noble things, like making your mom proud, is a profound reason for smiling. What if we flip this though: what if you smile as a cause instead of an effect? How much more profound could that be?

Distractions Make Me Smile

Distractions are everywhere we go.

Beautiful women no matter where.

There all so nice, I can't help but stare.

I get a big smile just to see their face.

To see them smile makes me joyful.

When they fling their hair, it's like whoooo!

I get breathless and I just smile.

-Nacho

From The Beat: It's great to hear that you treasure women so much. Your writing is a fun description of the way women can make a person feel.

Swim

It's Dla still up in the hall within nothing to do but write in The Beat Within. I like to talk about my favorite hobby and it's swimming I like to go to the Lakewood Swimming Pool and do some laps. I was going to be a lifeguard but I got locked-up. I'm probably a little rusty on it, but when I get out I am going to start it up again.

-Dla

From The Beat: Being a lifeguard is a unique trait and one of which to be proud. When you get out, this could be your ticket to a different lifestyle... what do you think?

Haters

There's haters everywhere
but me and my squad don't care.

We think it's good when the haters wanna stare.

We walk by. We say hi.

They probably sayin' them broads tie die.

We colorful and we don't care.

We throw our fingers in the air.

We nice and all, but don't mess.

That's real.

-Li'l S

From The Beat: Stay nice. Don't hate back. Keep walkin' on by.

What Makes Me Smile

The things that makes me smile is being with my family. Also chilling with my boys and home girls and having a good time, like drinking a 40, partying all night 'till I can't stand no more.

Also, showing my lil' cousins' the right way to go. And buy them stuff and take them out. Even seeing my mom and dad together, that's what makes me smile.

-Matthew

From The Beat: Those are all things to smile about. We're glad to hear that you've got love for your family and especially for your little cousins. We hope that you also show yourself the right way and stay outta places like these - because that's best way to show them what to do.

What Makes Me Smile: My Lady's Cute Laugh

What's up Beat what it do? I'm just here writing today's topic "What makes me smile." What makes me smile? Well my lady makes me smile. She's the only person that makes me smile when I think of her. The reason why she makes me smile is that when I think about her laugh she has a cute laugh. Will that's what makes me smile will got to cut this short later.

-Marco

From The Beat: Sounds like you miss you miss yo' girl Marco. Why you in here? You have a girl that's missing you right now. Why would you wanna be in here with all those dudes. Wouldn't you rather be with your girl? And can you try to remember this feeling next time you're out and you get tempted to mess up?

Boxing, My Anti-Drug

I really like to smoke weed, but one thing that always made me put the blunt down was boxing. Ever since I was 15, boxing really interested me. I found something in it that weed can't satisfy.

The thrill of fighting: feeling the blood running through your veins, feeling the sweat run down my face, and that feeling you get of accomplishment when those three minutes are up. Boxing really drove me for a while. I had a dream to become one of the best in the world, but I ended up smoking more and more and I drifted away from my boxing.

If I could, I would box again but right now there's too much other shhh I'm trippin on. But boxing will always be my anti-drug.

-Tony

From The Beat: Boxing is a great sport and even with all "the shhh" you are tripping off of, you can go back to it. Maybe it will help you clear your head and get focused.

The Anti-Drug

My anti-drug is being with my family and just messing around, playing with my baby brother, talking to my step-dad, going to my homies house and playing PS2 or computer games or me and my homie goes to the Japanese Garden and watch the koi fish, because it's a relaxing place over there. Those are my anti-drugs.

Also, something that makes me smile everyday is knowing that my baby brother is going to learn how to walk soon, and that when I get out I'm gonna play with his little ass. Ha ha!

I can't wait to get released and see my family. Everytime I think about all the things I'm going to do in the outs, it makes me smile a lot. Alright peace, Beat!

-Buddah

From The Beat: You have a great list of anti-drugs, especially just chilling in a relaxing place like the Japanese garden. Don't forget this great list when you are out there and feel like you have nothing to do.

Placement

What's good? Me just waitin' for placement I've been waitin' for hella long. I hope I get out next month if not I'll write more soon.

-Pacman

From The Beat: Dear Pac man, we hope that you stay patient and soon you'll be off to your placement. And if not keep writing us.

My Anti-Drug is My Girl

I'm addicted to my girlfriend and the sound of her voice. The way she sings, the look in her eyes when she knows I have something bothering me. Just the way she smiles is enough to make me happy. She doesn't want me doing drugs so I don't.

No if or buts about it. As long as she is there nothing else matters, if it makes her happy. I'm happy so why would I need drugs.

-Wolverine

From The Beat: We're glad to hear that you have a great girlfriend that doesn't want you to do drugs. She cares about you a lot and she just wants the best for you. We hope that you get out you spend your time with your girl and stay on the right path.

The Trip to The Mall

What's up Beat? How's it going? I ain't feeling none of the topics today, so I'm going to talk about my trip to the mall.

Well, it began like this. I was sleeping - I believe it was 7:10 am and out of nowhere I hear my name on the speaker: "Raymond G., you a OT." I was like: 'What? He's trippin'. So, I went back to sleep.

A minute later he opened my door and said, 'G, get up for an OT!' I got up, not believing what I heard. So, I got up happy and I was like: 'What? For real?' I just got up and left.

The most embarrassing thing happened. I had to go to the mall with shackles because I had an appointment with the eye doctor to get some glasses. I look weird with them, but they look cool. Anyways, on my way walking to the glass place, I seen a lot of beautiful women, but I was embarrassed because I was in shackles. The girls thought that I was sexy, but at the end, I was like 'screw it. Who cares?' So when I got escorted to the eye doctor, I guess they where expecting me there and brought a lot of coffee and donuts. That was the best trip I ever had.

-PlayBoy

From The Beat: Sounds like a fun day at the mall. It's interesting how small errands become exciting when you're locked up, huh? We hope the next time you go to the mall you'll be free of the system.

My Girl Can Put a Smile On A Pit Bull's Face!

Man, the only person that makes me smile is my one and only baby girl. When I'm with my girl she makes me feel like I'm somebody she really cares for.

She's the one that can really put a smile on a pit bulls face ha-ha just playing. Like this one time I was really sad because I got into a fight with my parents, and I called her up and told her, to stop by and that time she really came and made me smile. She is always there for me, and I would always be there for her too.

At least that's worth having a smile in my face. Till next time beat.

-Chato

From The Beat: It sounds like what you have with your girl is real and true. What happened with your parents? What kind of advice did your girl give you? And do you usually follow her advice?

My Girl Puts A Smile On My Face

Some one that puts a smile on my face is my girl. The reason why my girl puts a smile on my face is when I get home from handling my business or chillin' wit the homies, it puts a smile on my face to see her and that I made it through another day.

Something I do to put a smile on my girls face is when she sees me or I surprise her with something good.

-David

From The Beat: How does she put a smile on your face? What kind of business do you be handling with your homies? How does your girl feel about you being locked up? We don't think she's smiling about that.

Skate For Life

SK8boarding is my anti-drug.

Kick-push-kick-push-and cost.

Sk8ing makes me feel good about myself.

When I land a big trick and it looks clean – it makes me feel, well, great. Landing tricks is really fun and they takes time to master, and the great thing is it's a drug that just gets better the longer you do it.

-P(e)tree

From The Beat: It is awesome to have an outlet like skateboarding to spend hours on, instead of just sitting in a room smoking and playing video games. We hope your addiction lasts a long time.

I Like Chicken

When I get out the first thing I am going to do is ask my mom if we can have chicken for dinner. The chicken that they serve here is fake as hell and it is dry. I miss my family and my mom's cooking. When I first got locked up, I kept thinking I would starve to death.

-Sad Guy

From The Beat: Hey Sad Guy – we hope you get released soon. That wet and real chicken is waiting for you.

A Contagious Smile

I smile when someone makes me laugh. Yeah I love to smoke and drink but the best feelin in the world other than those is laughing. I have the best time when someone can make me laugh. But all the time I can make other's laugh. I can always say something stupid that will end up with me almost crying cause I laughed so hard. A smile is contagious.

I really believe that.

-Dopey Girl

From The Beat: Next time give us an example of a time someone made you laugh, and how you make others feel good too. As for your love to smoke and drink, we think it's time to cut that out of your diet!

I'm Back Again

What's up! Damn, I've only been out for a month and now I'm back again. I got two new charges and a violation. They want to send me to the ranch but whatever happens, happens. Next time, I'ma do good for sure and put that in action and not just in words. Well I'm in here with my lady Estela and my best friend Melissa, and Samantha. Well, like they say: Do the crime and now you got to do the time.

- Bianca

From The Beat: How exactly are you going to put your change into action? It seems like you came back quickly and you are excited to be with your friends inside, when you should be excited to be free and taking care of yourself.

Crackin' A Smile

Some thing that makes me smile is my girl and my son. They are the two things that keep me up and going up another day.

I wake up and think about my family and I smile.

-Peter

From The Beat: You should be cheesing when you think about your girl and your son. We hope that you take this time in halls to realize that you have no business on being in here. You should be out spending time with your family, your girl, and your son.

My Niece

My anti-drug is when I take my niece to the park. I have to be sober to take her to the park. I can't just take her all loaded off weed and drink. I have to have some responsibility in life. If I did what I did messed up, what kind of uncle would I be? A bad one and I assure you that is what I am NOT, so make sure everybody to be sober around your kids.

- D Amelio

From The Beat: Wow, this is so sincere and such good advice – it seems like you are a great Uncle and that people can learn from you.

I Got Lots of Love to Make Me Smile

The thing that makes me smile is my family, and my girl.

My family is big, so I got lots of love that makes me smile.

I am just lucky to have a family that loves me. For my girl I'm lucky to have her because she makes me smile in many different ways. But the smile that really made so happy is when my girl got pregnant now it sucks because it's the fact that I'm in here.

I put my girl through so much stress, and it's not good for her can I do? I'm in this crap hole. She lost the baby but even though she still is my main one, she's my wife.

-Smiler

From The Beat: You both suffered terrible stress on account of you getting caught up in the system. And your family too. Do you think about this now that you're locked down? Do you wonder about how things could be different, for you, for your loved ones? We believe you could change your life if you wanted to. Do you?

It All Makes Me Smile

Dave Chappelle makes me laugh; he's on Comedy Central.

Yes, I like to smile, smiling make me feel better. When I think back on it. When I was drunk and fell on my face. When my boy got jumped I laughed, yeah I like to go to my computer and check my e-mail. And stuff like that.

I like to read certain books. I like to go to parties and freak dance with the girls; I like to collect CD's like 2pac, Bone Thugs, and some oldies. I like to watch T.V when I'm heck a high. I like to go to the movies and watch something very funny, when I'm high I would want a combo pizza with some buffalo wings, we need some hot links too, hell yeah!

You have to love your mom's home cooking because if you don't then she'll beat your but and then leave you there to starve.

-Monkey

From The Beat: Sounds like you've got that approach to life that makes it easy for you to see what's funny, what's worth laughing at, how to find happiness. We're down with all that, except for the getting high part, because you know how it is. Once you are in the system, you need to stay sharp to stay out of trouble, not "blunt".

My Mom Makes Me Smile

One thing that makes me smile the most is hanging out with my friends and seeing my mom everyday. When I am chillin' with my friends, we usually just mess around and make up funny shhh and do shhh that's out of the ordinary. When I'm hanging out with my mom, she's just a comedian. She tells me about all the crazy stuff that happened in her day and all the jokes she tells me about just makes me laugh. But just being around my mom makes me smile, because I'm always happy around her. And that's what makes me smile. Until next time Beat, peace.

-Shawn

From The Beat: Wow, that's great that you and your mom have such a good relationship and laugh and have fun. That is rare and you should be thankful.

The People That Makes Me Smile

The people that make me smile are my two kids. No matter what they are doing - they make me laugh and smile. They make me smile cause when they find out a new thing, their reaction to it is just so funny it makes me smile. The way they smile is so cute it makes me smile. So in conclusion my kids are my most precious thing to me and they make me smile.

-Joker

From The Beat: It seems like you love your children very much and want to see them again. While it is nice to think of them doing cute things, what are you doing to be with them again?

Staring at These Four Walls

This is some bull crap, up in juvenile hall up in my room just staring at these plain four walls.

One day I thought I was going home but I was wrong. It made me real mad and sad. My P.O. had detained me that's hella messed up. Ninjas telling me how to survive, Do some exercise, push-ups, sit-ups etc. and other things. Juvenile hall sucks its like hell; I'm going to do what ever it takes for I can't return to this crap hole any more.

-Young Cash

From The Beat: We're sorry you're so miserable, but in a way we're glad, because it will beef up your determination to stay away. You deserve better than to be locked up in the system, and we hope you remember that when you are released?

Not A Lot to Smile About

What's crackin' Beat? It's that sexy homeboy Gumbie writing on what makes me smile.

Well to tell you the truth in here there's not that much to smile about. But I smile because I'm happy, and what makes me happy is a lot of things. Like when I see my little sister, my brother, or my grandmother, my family makes me smile. Or like when my P.O told me that I was getting sent to a group home in South Lake Tahoe, and that I'll be leaving at the end of December, or January, that made me smile.

Well that's all the time I have so I'll write some more next Thursday to my brothers and all the homeboys I know. Stay up!

-Gumbie

From The Beat: It's a trip how you started off not having stuff to smile about, and then when you thought about it a little, all these new ideas came up... It's like when we dig a little under the surface, we manage to find the things that keep us strong, no matter how bad it seems at first.

My Anti Drug Is Tagging

What's good Beat, I'm gonna tell you about my anti- drug. My anti drug is tagging. I can go cut and forget about everything and just go put up my work on the wall.

It's a bigger rush then doing any drug. Tagging I can express myself and show people a part of myself cause everything I put up is a peace of my soul.

-Big Worm

From The Beat: But the price of your freedom is too high to pay: Tagging on other people's property is illegal. That doesn't mean that you have to stop tagging - you've got the art and the urge to paint in your blood and your soul. But you can get involved in your community and help put up murals, teach the little kids how to paint. There are a lot of jobs for artists with good skills.

Wish I Could Be With My Family

What's up Beat, it's your homie Sensitive, I'm just here writing today's topic. What makes me smile is my family and ex-lady they make me smile when I think of them they bring a smile to my face. I just wish I could be with them. Well, gotta cut this short. Alrato.

-Sensitive

From The Beat: You can make your own wish come true. Stop wishing and handle your business so you won't have to be coming back to these halls. Then you can be with your family and maybe you can get back with your lady.

Smiles

Some days don't take much to make me smile. I'll be kickin' it with my homeboys drinking, kicking back, rapping and talking about shit that's going on. It takes away my worries. I ain't gotta trip off nothing. I love it. The cloudy days ... man, those get to me sometimes. It's hard to smile but I laugh and grin when I'm around the right people. My brothers just bump my day up a notch, or get some females and get shhh crackin'. These are some things that make this kid smile.

-Frankie

From The Beat: This is a great snapshot of who you are, the friends, cloudy days, your brothers - thanks for sharing who you are. It seems like too many people put walls up, so thanks for lowering yours a little bit.

No Drama Makes Me Smile

The things that make me smile is when I'm at home and when the family is gathered and everyone is having a good time. Also when there is no drama in the house. That's what makes me smile.

-Sunny

From The Beat: It sure is nice when there is no drama in the house and everyone in the house is feeling good.

Memories to Make Me Smile

Let me tell you about something that makes me smile, mainly my family. Nah mean? Being in here is a real stressful time. And I think every one in here can relate.

But when I think about playing arm wrestling with my niece, or bloody knuckles with pearly white. Not just that you know? I got to give it up to my main squeeze Stephanie, we have this thing that when we start kissing that we always play fight crap like that, ha-ha ...I'm already missing it.

-C-Safe

From The Beat: Thanks for sharing these memories, they made us smile too. It's funny how there's a little roughness in even these memories, like play-fighting is just a part of life. Why do you think that is? Is it because of the real roughness in the world outside?

Food and The Beat

I'm writing about what makes me smile. What makes me smile is when I get food, also when I read the beat within. Because it amuses me and I laugh at that crap.

-J/Loe

From The Beat: Food for the body, food for the soul! We're glad we could give you a laugh or too, and hopefully more than just a laugh...

Beat

Well beat it's the one and only peanut, but I would like to let you all know who makes me smile. It's my hyna ...she is always on my mind 24/7, and that might seem impossible but its not.

And even in my dream, and even when I'm not dreaming, it's hard to be thinking about the good. I try to do my best but stress continues to call on me I wish the smile could last forever but that's only in my pictures and memory. But when she's on my mind the smiles are there with happiness, and a mixture of sadness because she's not at my reach.

When I need her at my most hard times that special girl is Amanda. But she is the creator that appears on this gangsters face. Well Beat, the special one is always going to be mine and that is going to be realness.

And until the day we both smile when we're near each other, I'll be sure to let you know, the details, of smiles and love at the same time when the time comes.

Well Beat got to go for now. And to all in this place be cool and stay maintaining to see a better days that are soon to come.

-Peanut

From The Beat: We feel the love here, and the respect that you have for your girl, but if you really love her, you need to give her the best: A free man. A man who isn't in jail or enslaved by a gang and violence mentality. Can you love her as she deserves if you're still clinging to this gangster insanity?

The Homie In The Hall Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is when I wake up in the morning to Birdy serving trays to us. I wake up mad as hell, then I see his face. Then I'm good again. He looks just like a bird.

-Polar Bear

From The Beat: We're glad to hear that you and your homie like cheering each other up. Don't have too much fun in here though. We want to see you get out that is if you can handle freedom.

My One And Only

Something that make me smile is the memories that I had with my girl. One memory I always think of that brings a smile to my face is when I got with my girl. I was at the mall with her as "friends." As we were walking outside, I notice she was cold I lend her my jacket and I she saw that she didn't expect it but she chose to wear it. Later on I got cold myself and we started hugging each other. I couldn't believe it but she held on me tighter than I expected. After a bit of silent we looked at each other and I looked in her eyes and she smiled at me and I smiled back. She told me how she felt and I told her how I felt and I asked her if she'd like to be my girl. She smiled and said, "Of course." Then I kissed her and held her tight.

-Roc

From The Beat: Actions speak louder than words. You could be kissing your girl right now, instead of daydreaming about the day that you kissed her.

Appealed My Sentencing

I had sentencing on Dec 5. I went with two staff and this girl to court. She was cool. I was just hella thinking that they were going to send me to the ranch. I was chopping it up with that girl for a cool min. she put some smiles on my face, she was really funny.

But when I went to the courtroom. These people were over-stating things out. I was trying hard not to laugh. They gave me a sentence I didn't want, so I appealed it. So I will see what happens next.

-Victor

From The Beat: We'll keep our fingers crossed for you. Do you have good feelings about your lawyer's abilities? We hope so, but mostly we hope you get that release and never come back!

Smiling

I'm smiling when I shouldn't,

I smiled thinking I was going home, but I couldn't. Putting lyrics on a simple page that I wouldn't yelled at my mom,

I would of rather smiled

I was hella yelling and scaring all the little child's.

Yeah I got somewhat wild.

Now I'm locked up I think for a little while. I'm keeping in my head up though.

But I have to go. Peace people!

-Big-Keno

From The Beat: Great flow. Keep them coming, and yes, keep that head up!

If You Want This Fame

Man I'm a boss on these streets

Catch me on block with the heat tucked away in my jeans

All my life all I wanted was to be a young "G"
Now I'm messin' with connects that'll front me a whole key 'cause of my status

And when it comes to pockets ours is the fattest
And when it comes to weight the triple beam is correct

The fiend's gone' smoke until their last breath
When I'm on the block the knocks know I got the rock tucked away in my sock

So I don't get caught

Up and down the streets bustin' these low life's

So I can re-up on my precious white

My brother cook's it just right, standin' over the stove all freakin' night

Watchin' the fiends come and go all day

It don't matter to me 'cause I'm getting paid

Never blame anyone for the choices I made

I blame myself for learnin' the hard way

Don't have a role model so I turned to the streets
October first my mom almost buried me six feet deep
It's amazing you can take the thug out the streets but can't take the streets out the thug

And the only way out the game is with a slug in your brain

So it's your decision if you want this fame...

-Cdv

From The Beat: Do you want the street fame/ You ain't the only one in the streets man/ You ain't the only one bustin' knocks and glocks so peep game/ most people that's famous in the streets get buried/ Ain't no career in drug dealing most people get caught in a hurry/ how many successful drug dealers do you know that's on the block still/ two ways out 1. You might catch a hot one or 2. The DA'll throw you a hot deal/ Once you hit the pen ain't no more hot meals/ the fame ain't nothing, and the game ain't nothing/ It's up to you if you wanna live or die, 'cause you could be something.

You Make Me Smile

When I hear your voice I smile
When I see your face I smile
When I kiss you I smile
I smile when I'm wit' you

'Cause I'm happy to have a lady as good as you.

-Sneaks

From The Beat: Now, if you have such a wonderful lady then why are you here? Think about what you're doing? Your lady doesn't want you here and neither do we.

My Special Place An Anti-Drug

One of the things I like to do besides drugs is to kick it at my special place. I like it cause no one knows about it, so I can just chill there by myself and not trip about getting run up on or anything like that. When I'm there I just think about whatever pops up and watch the world past me by. When I'm there its usually pretty quiet there's not that much people around. That's how I like it nice and peaceful.

At night its cool too you can look at the city lights. I know I'm not supposed to write about something beside drugs, but sometimes me and my friends just chill there and do drugs. Like just drink liquor and just chill, one time my friend was high and pretended to be swimming in the grass, and one time me and my friends strip down in our boxers and jump in the lake we weren't on drugs that time though.

-Xnotoriousviet

From The Beat: We're not gonna be the ones to tell you not to drink or to use drugs. We'll let your PO tell you all that stuff. We're glad to hear that you have a special place where you can just go to, whenever you feel like things are bothering you or you just need to chill. Just think about what got you locked up. If it did have something to do with liquor and drugs though you have to think about what's more important, your freedom or the drugs and liquor. Be smart!

Family Is The Drug

My anti-drug is my family and my girlfriend. They're the ones who lecture me when I'm lost in the hood. When I'm holding a .45 cal ready to shoot but hear their voice saying. "What the ...?" They're the ones who I would truly love because even though I'm behind bars. They're the one whose names are on the envelope when it slides under my door.

-Ly

From The Beat: That's a very positive anti-drug. We glad to hear that your family and girl support you and have yo' back, but what happened to put you in jail? Obviously you weren't thinking of them them. Those people that write you are the ones that really care about you and don't wanna see you end up going down the wrong path. You have some decisions to make and some very serious ones too. You really have to think about your life, your family, and your girl, next time you decide to hold anything. Life behind bars ain't no joke, and neither is sleeping with the worms.

What Makes Me Smile

What Makes me smile is seeing my mom happy. Seeing my dad come home and making a priceless face. Seeing my brother come home smiling saying my name when I wait outside for him. Seeing my older brother laugh when it's needed. Seeing my girlfriend's beautiful face. The tender unique smile that can cure thousands of sick people. Seeing my best friend at my court. My homies, the people I care about. What makes me smile you say?! The ones I love which makes me smile every single day.

-Ly

From The Beat: That's something good to smile about. You have a lot of positive things going for you. Why are you here? You should be out smiling with your brother, family, friends, and girlfriend.



Out The Heart

Death little homie it stays on my mind
Lord take me please to my final destiny
And when I'm six feet deep please let me rest in peace
My eyes so blinded I can't even see
So many tears so much pain
Please let the rain wash it away
The things I've been through and done
You'll have to weigh by the ton
But Lord please hurry it up the devils taken my soul
And the hood has made me so bold that my heart is past stone cold
Now mija please don't cry, till you your daddies been liven a lie
Only thing I've conquered in life were the fears I used to hide
Now when I look to the sky
All I see is my wasted years fly by
Now take a deep look in my eyes
You'll see death in the flesh
Tried to search for love in my heart but I guess there's nothing left
Learned how to cook up a storm
Taught by the best of the best
Shift started at sunrise and didn't end 'till it set
And the only thing that came off the stove were them angels of death
Used to walk the block with a vest
Grew up so quick that my childhood makes me sick
Mama tried so hard to raise me right but couldn't keep me out the night
Got so deep in this game all there is left are the flames
And every time that I dream I see these demons chasing after me
Lord are you hearing my prayers
'Cause at times I feel like nobody cares
And even though we talk every night I can't help but sleep on their life
And the day that I die will you condemn me with an afterlife?

-Kastro, Santa Clara

From The Beat: This great piece of writing really reflects on your thoughts and feelings. We hope that you don't feel like you don't have anyone on your side. We can understand what you're going through. Some of us go through a lot of trials and tribulations in our life and it takes its toll on us. But remember, you still have your whole life ahead of you. You can change the way your living. There are so many things that you have to endure in life and you have to be strong. Only the strong survive, life isn't fair.

Love

There's a part of me
That wants us to be
Just the way we are
For we don't mess things up
But it's killing me
'Cause the rest of me
Wants to feel your body baby
I want to tear it up
And do some thing naughty with you
I'll do some things to you
That no one else could do
'Cause maybe I'm the one
To make you feel real good
Being friends is coo
But now it's time that I
Start making love to you
You're like the only one
That brings a smile to my face
With out you by my side
I'll be lost and so confused
You the feelings that I have for you
Are so true
You brighten up my days
When I was down and so blue
I was there when you need me
I was there by your side, through your hardest times
You're my Pinay Queen and, I'm your king
You're my girl, and you're my everything.

-Ace

From The Beat: Sounds like you have very deep feelings for your girlfriend. This poem is very well written, but maybe next time you can share this kind of work directly with your girl. That way she knows exactly how you're feeling.

My Favorite Food is Everything

I think I don't have any other favorite foods. I would eat any thing as long as it taste good feel me? I like any kind of food, but not Indian food. It smells weird at it looks weird. That why I don't eat it.

Well one of my favorite places to eat is Bo-town it's in down town. Man I can't wait to get out that's the very first place that I'm going for And I also suggest that you try it out peace!

-Hungry

From The Beat: We'll give it a taste, but in return, you've got to try a Chicken Korma with extra Nan and Laasi. That's some Indian food that will change your mind forever, and make you a fan!!!

Smile For Me

Baby the way you smile
It makes me feel all so wild
I love it when you say my name
You love me even though I'm in a gang
Through ups and downs, thick and thin
The love we make over and over again
You always make me smile when I'm down
You turn my frown up side down
I want you to be the lady next to me, when I sleep
I love you baby, want you to have my child
Damn baby girl, the way you make smile

-In love

From the Beat: You should really send this poem to your girl. She would really love it. Why are you wasting your time in Juvenile Hall when you have a great girl on the outs? Take care of you and hold off on the child!!

My Homie Makes Me Smile

I wake up to my Polar Bear every morning as I hand him his tray. Chili in his room but forget it I feel like I'm in an igloo! This homeboy makes me smile.

-Birdie

From The Beat: Well, think about warm thoughts and you might get warm. We're glad to hear that you and your friend cheer each other up.

My Anti-drugs

The things that keep my mind off smoking weed is, weight lifting and women.

Even though I like to smoke weed and lift weights and talk to women, I can't do that at J. Hall. Being stuck here in J. Hall made me stop wanting to smoke weed, since I'm in here for weed. My addiction for women is so strong that I'm quitting weed and I'm never coming back here again. I'ma keep lifting weights, keeping getting big and keep talking to new women when I get out of here and never come back.

-Matt

From the Beat: If weed is what's holding you back from your freedom than please quit it. You already know it's not worth it being locked up in Juvenile hall. Keep doing your thing like lifting weights when you get out and when you get off probation do whatever you want.

See You Smile

For me you were always there
You loved me, respect me and always care
When we both go to trial
Freedom for me, what makes you smile?
Stay a couple months make you cry
Feeling pain, like you cant reply
I'm sorry for all the lies
When I was a child
I love to see you smile
You were always calm
I will always love you mom

-Sok

From The Beat: We can understand your feelings. Next time your mom comes to visit you, you should show her what you wrote about her. And let her know how much you love her.

*My favorite food is Carl's Jr.
When I get out that's the very
first place I'm going. Carl's Jr.
boy!*

Carl's Jr

My favorite food is Carl's Jr. When I get out that's the very first place I'm going. Carl's Jr. boy! I want some soda more than anything. They should really have some soda at the hall. Another one of my favorite places to eat is Dairy Bell; they have some really good food there. They should have some better food at the hall.

-Chaves

From The Beat: We agree that the food should be better in the hall, but we hope you eat more than fast food out there too! It's all chemicals and fat and, have you ever noticed that after you eat a bunch of Carl's Jr. you feel sick? There's a reason for that!

My Girlfriend's Tone

What makes me smile is hearing my girlfriend's tone
When my girl accepts my collect call and I hear her on
the phone

We might not talk for long, but it puts a smile on my
face

I just wish I can grab her and put my hands around her
waist

Even though a smile's enough

I wish we could do other stuff

But her mom blocked my calls

No more smiles in the halls

-Sneaky

From The Beat: Is your girlfriend's mom afraid that you could become a bad influence on her, that you'll pull her into your mess? Those collect calls can be way expensive, so who's paying for them? Her mother? When you're free again, what can you do to show her mom that she can trust you? How does your girlfriend respond to you messing up, getting arrested and ending up in juvy? What does she encourage in you? What kind of an influence are you on her?

I'm Going To Jump In My Bed

Ten days in the halls

It was hell, but I did them all

Can't wait 'til I get out

I'm going to jump in my bed

It feels like a cloud

Unlike these hard things

I can't wait 'til I get to eat

My mom's home-cooked meals

I'm not coming back in here

Wearing other people's clothes

I'm out of here on Sunday

-Almost free

From The Beat: Sounds good, and that you've learned that you don't want to go back to juvy. Maybe, when you're back home, you should cook your mom a fabulous meal, to show her how much you appreciate her and all her homemade cooking.

My Homemade Gnocci Got Me Restitution

One time I went into court with the knowledge that I
was probably going to get in trouble for a dirty UA (urine
analysis.) I made some homemade gnocci for the judge
and the whole drug court team, and I ended up getting
home restriction instead of going to the halls.

-Mark

From The Beat: You must be an amazing homemade gnocci cook. We've never heard of anybody incarcerated cooking for the judge and entire court team and had their sentence modified because of his cooking skills. What special ingredients did you use? Maybe you should have cooked some fabulous lasagna for the judge in this case!

I Am A Man

I am doing the right thing by not smoking. I had to get
out of the smoking thing. I got bad at doing it, but I know
I am a man, but my dad said I am not a man, but I got the
proof. My dad's wrong.

But my mom know I am a man, but my dad say I am a
lil' boy, but I know I am not. I got to be a man. I got to be
a man. If I don't, I guess my dad was right. I am a man. I
don't care what my dad say.

-Almost grown

From The Beat: Some fathers try to encourage their sons to become men by challenging them, and that can be humiliating to the boy. Sometimes the fathers sincerely mean well; other times they are completing with their own sons and try to hurt them by dissing them. When you write about trying to quit smoking, do you mean cigarettes or weed? Regardless, quitting either is a good idea, and you can do it. Just know it's really hurting your health. But whether you succeed in stopping smoking or not, your manhood will not be affected.

My Weakness

Tell you the truth, I'm addicted to women.

It's like Superman and kryptonite

--girls are my weakness.

-Derrell

From The Beat: Okay, that's real! Why don't you write for The Beat what special qualities your favorite girls possess, that appeal to you so much? Or do you like all ladies?

Being Away from People I Love

Oh, my God. I seriously can't stand being away from my
baby boy. It has been about two weeks since I last saw
him and I can't stop talking 'bout him. Every day I cry
and cry, because he is the most greatest, most wonderful
thing that has happened to me ever.

Also, being away from my cousins and my uncles and
some of my friends. Being in the halls is really, really
scary, because I barely know anybody. You're in a cold,
small room and you have to sleep on a hellu uncomfortable
bed.

Man, I miss hella people and now I won't be able to
talk to them until I get out of this hellhole. Hopefully I
will get to talk to my boy soon, and I will soon be able to
see him, because if I ain't, I will go really crazy, which I
really don't wanna do. LOL.

Wow! Once I get out of this place, I will see so many
people that I love so much. So, yeah, life is hard, but we
all get through it.

-Angel Baby

From The Beat: How is having a baby son influencing all your priorities? Often, when a teenager has a baby, the newborn either scares the parents with their huge new responsibility and they mess up and even lose custody, or the parents realize what really means the most to them now and they work their lives around the baby, because that the little baby is helpless without them. Where are you in all this? Who is taking care of your child without you? What will you change about your life, when you're free again, to make sure you won't endanger your life with your son?

Being Back In The Halls

Man, being back in the halls is just shhh. Also, you can't
have fun with your friends at the mall—got to stay in your
rooms for many hours. Man, I just want to go home so
bad. I can't wait to be back with my family and with my
guy.

-Lonely Girl

From The Beat: That sounds reasonable and normal. Maybe you've already learned you don't want to be in juvy ever again, no matter what!

Compelled By Grades In School

I like to do well in school. When I see that "A" on a test,
I cannot help but need more. I will not stop. Grades are
everything. I know that there's money, money that cannot
be taken from me. It's permanent. I keep slipping. It is
uncontrollable at times, but then I realize it's my game
and my life, and that I am unstoppable if I put my mind to
my ambitions. I do well in math, history, English, but not
PE, art, ceramics. Maybe it's me.

-Kevin

From The Beat: It's great that you're getting terrific grades in most of your classes, but what are you really learning that you consider fascinating? Useful? If there were no grades, what would you pursue just because you love learning it? How do you equate grades with money? Do you ever create anything—a song, a poem, an invention, that doesn't exist until you dream it up? Sometimes in life, those who are the most creative end up earning the most money and have the most fun finding out what they're capable of and watching their imaginations turn into real products.

A Police Magnet May Be Inside My Skull

When I get out of juvenile hall or county jail or wherever I am in custody at the time, I know exactly what I am going to do. I am going to the Roast Haus and I'm getting the turkey sandwich special with the stuffing, turkey, cheddar cheese, cranberry sauce and a bowl of gravy to dip it in, and a side of macaroni and cheese.

Then I'm going next door to Jamba Juice to get a berry lime sublime smoothie.

Then that night I am going to call up a Coast Guard recruiter and find out how to enlist in the Coast Guard as soon as I can.

I am tired of being in trouble for stupid shhh. It seems like the police have a magnet placed on the inside of my skull that is attached to their squad cars. I just need to get out of this life ASAP.

-Mark

From The Beat: You really know what you want to do for your future! But of course you know that the police wouldn't even be paying attention to you if you weren't in some kind of mess, right? They're not reading your thoughts, but are you into something that causes your conscience to emanate vibes that say, "Ought oh, I'm really messing up right now, please don't catch me, police!" and the police can feel them? So if you stop doing whatever that is, don't you think the police would leave you alone? You could still join the Coast Guard if you want to, but you could also consider all kinds of local jobs that might be fun, keep you out of trouble, and earn you some cash.



She Go!

Hazel eyes and silk shoulder-length hair
Everywhere we go, I know every ninja stare
Womp woo womp; her hips sway like grass blades
Every day she get a A; something like class grades
She don't know I want her, but I got at her like that
Super PHAT—defined as super phat
She dress just right, all the time it seem like
She on top of her shhh. I call her Queen Right

-Mainey

From The Beat: How does she feel about you? Does she think you're all that? What is her personality like? Is she nice to people? To you? Is she kind? Funny? Bright? How does she influence you to be?

I'm Peace

When I'm peace, I don't care about anything—who you are, where you come from. I'm never scared.

-Jimmy

From The Beat: You seem like you have a calm soul. When are you at peace?

In Springtime I Sprout Like A Flower

I love stars
They my favorite shape
I'm like a jungle money
Tryin' to escape

I'm money hungry
Shame to fate
Love when Grams
Makes me some steak

I'm leaving Friday at eight
What am I going to do when I get out?

I'm going to sprout
Over rain, like a shower
With positive things
I'm just like a flower
Who sprouts in the spring

-Baby Pebbles

From The Beat: hope you're sprouting like you've written in your poem, and that your Grammy has fed you well. Since you write that you're money hungry, are you looking for a job? Maybe an after-school part-time job and/or one on the weekends.

I'm No Hater

I was just thinking about haters. I came to realize that no matter what you do or who you are in life, you are always going to come across people that hate, for whatever reason.

If you ask me if I hate haters, my answer would be, "No," because that would make me a hater, myself, anyways.

I have come across people in my life that hate on me for whatever reason, but the way I see it is they are doing me a favor, because it's those haters that strive me to do better, and while I rise, I watch them crumble in their own misery while they spend so much time and energy on something that they so-called hate. Damn, that's funny, because while you thinkin' about how much you hate me, I'm not even trippin' off of you, because I'm beyond all that bullshhh.

This is dedicated to all you haters—go on and hate, 'cause I still love ya.

-Frisco

From The Beat: You've already discovered the answer to how to handle haters. Just ignore them. Oftentimes they'll watch you and soon realize that there's no reason to hate you, that there's nothing to fear from you, and they'll end up liking you. Jealousy can cause a whole lot of hate, unfortunately. If you can be friendly to those who start out hating on you, you might end up with a whole lot of good friends.

My Yummy Ultimate Bacon Cheeseburger

When I get out I want to eat at Jack-In-The-Crack, because it's good and I live down the street from it. I would probably order the Ultimate Bacon Cheeseburger, curly fries, and a soda.

-Lonely Girl

From The Beat: Sounds fabulous and yummy! Worth staying free for!

Death

what comes to my mind when I hear the word death.

Just do yo' thang

get yo' money by any means necessary
don't ever let know body screw you over.

That's how I look at it

if It's yo' time to go then It's yo' time to go

God took you for a reason

I really don't think about death

It's just when It's my time It's my time man.

But when one of my homies die, man,
which really don't happened

'cause we don't slip

but when one of my homies die I feel bad
but my homies knew when it was gon' come

all my homies did the' thang, you feel?

but when my homies die we just we do what we gotta do
and don't talk, man just like that.

And my ninjas still living wit me

-Ice

From The Beat : You're saying if someone is killed violently that person is God? Please. God didn't take you, a hater took you, and that hater needs to be put away, 'cause no one deserves that power, no one -you, your homies or your rivals.

Life

I value my and my newborn son's life, because if it was not for me he would not be here and if it was not for my son I would be like, "forget this program and probation."

Holding my newborn baby made me look at life a whole new way.

If I had a fresh start I would take back all the screwed up shhh I done to others. My life would be full wit' positive things.

I would risk my life for my family especially for my son because they are my love ones. I most love my son because that is me. One person I loved was my baby mama that turnd out good 'cause we got a son together.

-Marcus

From The Beat: You need to get home to be with your child, your son. He needs you as does your baby's mother. What are your plans upon returning home?

Life Or Death

If I would get a tattoo of life or death it would be of the grim reaper with a dove in it's hand setting it free.

-Jacob

From The Beat: Tell us the story behind the reaper setting the dove free!

Death

Death!!

I been there

almost witnessed that

but yeah it's ugly for ninja now

that had me down for a minute but now I'm back
holding down the turf.

Ain't gone let that happen again

I'm just gone sit back and do the rest of my time
get out and thug it out 'till death.

-Jigg

From The Beat: Fulfill your placement, then blow your probation and either end up back in jail or worse, six feet under. Is that your plan? Sure your family is proud. Wouldn't they rather hear that you are doing big tings with your life, like getting a job and going to school?

Life

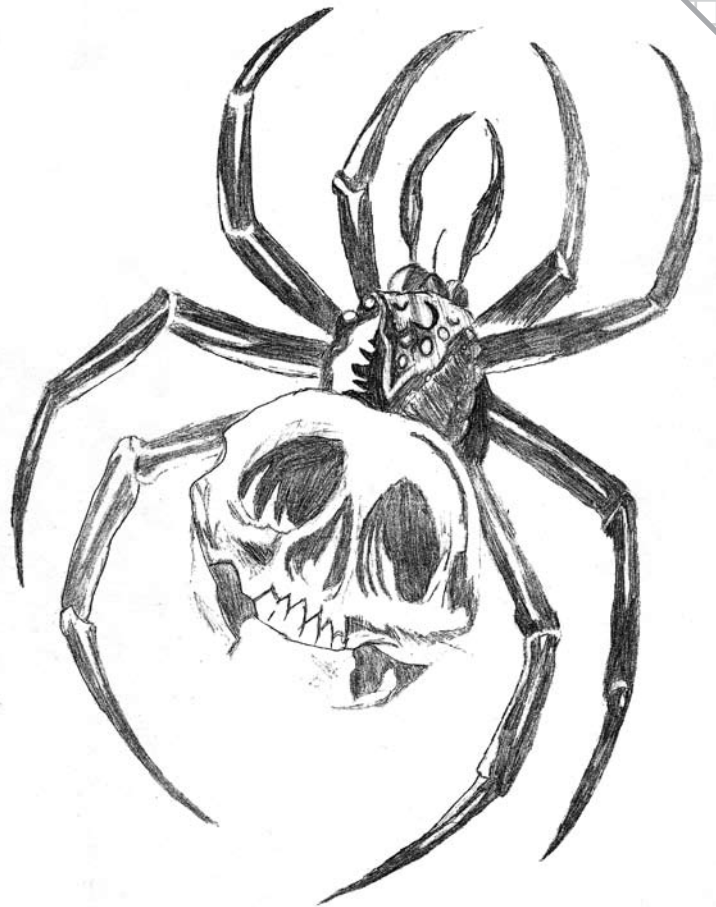
The person I love most is my mom' because she's always been there for me. No matter what the situation is she's always helped me out. Even if it means that she's has to come pick me up from the police station very early in the morning.

Even though I haven't been home for many months, she still loves me and tells me that she's waiting for me to get home.

Also because if it wasn't for her I would have never been born.

-Jo

From The Beat: Regardless, most mothers will love their child regardless of what he or she has done. We hope by the time you get home, you will do your part to make yourself and her proud. Step your game up!



No Title

Death is something not to be scared of

To me death means rebirth

when death comes someone is being born

but some people have no regards for life

Some people go by that saying,

Your born to die

so some people go on with out caring about life.

But really your born for a purpose

so that you would be remember

So like I said, death is something not to be

Scared of.

-Stunna

From The Beat: It's hard not to be scared. Most of us are afraid of the unknown. How have you become unafraid of death?

Life

Police always messing with my life.
Don't stop when they come around we still shootin dice.
When they hop out, I'm running for my life
I aint goin' out like that,
hit the cuts grab the gun and shoot the' lights out

-Young Mee

From The Beat: This is the most ridiculous thing we heard any one say. So the cops come and you run to grab a gun? Wake up and get out of your fantasy world. Get busy doing something productive with your life!!

Death

Death is I
I is death
Death I'm
By being at life
Death I'm living
Day by day
In this cool world
By been trapped
Life is bad
But what matters
If I'm death.
The day I leave
I'm a live,
I'm a brief,
I believe
When I leave!
But being here happy
Got me dead

-Lavelle

From The Beat: Why are you death? And why is death you living? How caqn your life be life and not death? What must occur for you to see that life is about living?

My One and Only

My one and only loves me...
My one and only is my everything...
She's my wifey... She's all I got...
She's always there... She only
Cares... when I'm down... She's
Up when I'm with her we hug...
She's the only one I want to lovew...
Shes not a north sider, she's not a south sider,
she's my one and only Mayra...
I miss you and I love ya always

-Grumpy

From The Beat: Get back to your special friend. Show her how much you love her by doing a great program and staying out of places like this.

Life

Life is something you want to cherish
'Cause when it's gone you'll miss it
Some people take life for a joke
But I don't
some people make mistakes and think life is over
But it's not mistakes
It means change
I take life as a gift
Because I was put here for a purpose
life is something to be proud of
when life is finish people should be proud of you
so take life as a gift.

-Stunna

From The Beat: Life is good. It should be something to cherish and make those who know you proud.

You Live To Die And You Die To Live

Many people don't wish to die
some commit suicide
people say why do we live here?
Why do we exist?
The way I see life is you live to die and you die to live
we live for a period of time then we die,
when a person dies another's born,
but that new born just entered life to end it's world.
Same goes for the streets,
one homie goes down and a little one rises
there is no end to it, it's just the cycle of life
just adapt to it accept the things you cannot change
we all running on a time clock....

-Rabbit

From The Beat: That's one way of looking at your life, but most we think live to live!! We live to accomplish things in our time on earth. All of us want a long life too, even the ones with a death wish, they didn't come on this planet thinking of dying . No one wants to die. Sure people are born every minute and yes another one is dying, but that doesn't make it ok when a young brother is gunned down early Saturday morning over drugs/turf. That we can't accept!

Keeping Their Names Alive

What's up wit' it Beat? I'm here to tell you about my tattooes. I got my tattoo's because I want to always remember my homies, RIP Stevie&Doobie.

I'm gonna get more that say the' names 'cause I'm gonna keep it lit fo' my homies which means keep they names alive.

-Stunna

From The Beat: At least for you, your homies will forever be alive on your body.



Smiling

I smile because I'm in trouble but know there's hope
 I smile because at least I'm not dead from selling dope
 I smile because I'm gonna be successful outside of jail
 I smile because I changed and not going to burn in hell
 I smile because I'm strong and continue to push
 I smile because I was nobody, now everybody shook
 I smile because when troubles have me down
 I always make it out so I can't lose
 I smile to see the smile on my brother and sister's faces
 They didn't like me back then but now I'm the greatest
 I smile
 Because I've been through it all so why be mad?
 I smile because my troubles are all in the past
 Smile for life, smile for yourself, I'm so happy
 I'm gonna smile facing my death

- Reggie

From The Beat: It sounds like you're at peace with your mistakes and that's a good place to be. Just don't forget that you still have to learn from your mistakes when you're out. Show your gratitude that you're "not dead from selling dope" by going back to it.

*I pray that the best happens
 for her. No more games or lies
 and she can change her ways*

The Wild Smile

What makes me smile is what makes me wild.
 I wish my mother could stay a while and visit with me a
 while longer.
 Locked-up like a dog with no family, no honor.
 I'm driven by insanity.
 Time is going by,
 as I look at the outside.
 Finally it's mine, I have to realize that life is so fine –
 Not worth doing a crime.
 I do what I do and pay my respects,
 Choose from the whos and never forget,
 The boys in blue and show some respect.

- Kong Fow

From The Beat: It's easy to say that it's "not worth doing a crime" when you're locked-up. The true test will come when you get out and have to make your own decisions. We hope that you don't act like someone with "no honor".

My Family Tree

The thing that makes me happy and the only thing I can say is my family, 'cause no matter what they are there for me. They won't let me down or leave me on the street. I'll always protect them like they protect me, under any cost. They're the only people I love. Without them, I couldn't live and I wouldn't be here or would I want to be here if I didn't have them.

That's why I hate being in here so much – not 'cause it's hard but 'cause I'm away from my family. That's the hardest thing I've ever had to face. Doing time is no joke but that's harder than being locked-up on the reals.

- Robert

From The Beat: You stated that you "hate being in here so much" because you're away from your family. What did you do to get in here? What will you do different when you're out? We hope that you can respect your family by not repeating your mistakes.

No One Makes Me Smile Like My Mom

There's a lot of people, friends and family that make me smile

But they're not here with me right now, but one person that is in Juve with me right now. That's my mom, Memori, I love her with all my heart.

Ya, we fight a lot, have our bad times, but we're always tight.

I pray that the best happens for her. No more games or lies and she can change her ways, but most of all, I can talk to her for days. I love her as a friend. I love her as a sister. My love for her will always be with me no matter if we are far apart. She's the one I can talk to about my problems. She's the one I adore. She's the one I lean on when I'm down. She's the one that can never make me frown. We will be separated for a while, but it's ok. I know she'll always be there when I need her. Most importantly, I will love her, there is no way them haters gonna' bring me down.

- Renee

From The Beat: It's great to have a good friend that stands by you, but you have to learn to stand on your own. While you two are apart, you need to make the right decisions for yourself. Strive to be a strong young woman, without any bad influences.

What makes me smile

His dark brown eyes
 Gives me the chills down my spine
 He says everything is going to be fine
 But deep down inside
 I know he's about to ride
 On without me
 He says he loves me one last time
 I tell him I love him too, but then
 Why am I always asking myself
 If that's really true?
 This person is my ex-boyfriend
 We're broken up now but every time
 I was around him, I had a smile
 On my face and so did he
 The feelings I felt with him
 Around me was indescribable but
 Why did I always wonder if he loved me?
 I don't know, but I still love him.

- Sophia

From The Beat: You said, "deep down inside, I know he's about to ride", why would you love someone who doesn't love you the same way? Before making him the center of your life, focus on your own life. It's not too late to do something great with your future.

My Man Smokey

There is only one person that can make me smile like no one else can and that's my man Smokey. Whenever I feel down, he makes me feel so happy. Everything he does brings a smile to my face and that's why I love him so much and can't wait until I get to see him again.

Now my man is going to prison for a few years. I miss him so much. I miss waking up in his arms and see a smile on his face. I just wish I could be with him right now. The only thing I really miss is when he takes me out. I'm always with him, singing to him. I just think of him a lot and can't wait until he gets out so we could be happy again.

- Tiffany

From The Beat: He's in prison and you're at the d-home, is that something to take pride in? The two of you need to get your life straight in order to be together. Otherwise, you'll just be an old memory to each other. Do your part in making the right decisions for your future.

What Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is my little boy. He's four months old. What sucks is I am still locked away from him. But I keep it on the positive side – so I won't feel that I'm not in his life. I am happy to know that he is healthy. He is the one who keeps me going in this life.

- Drifter

From The Beat: We know you want to be with your son. And we hope that happens soon. We also know that you need a very good plan, a plan that includes a way to keep your son healthy and well loved and well cared for. That means that you have to be healthy and that you have to take good care of yourself. Surely, your plan will include getting your high school diploma. And surely, it must include a change in life style. You have very important responsibilities now. The decisions you make can determine what kind of a wife your son will get a chance to lead. You know how important a good role model is. You need to be that for your son. Let the love you feel for him empower your life. Let it help move you in the right direction. Do well, Drifter. Do well.

Life Makes Me Smile

To tell you the truth, life makes me smile. I'm always smiling, in good and bad times. But what really makes me smile and is very important, is seeing my son. That makes me smile. And seeing his picture makes me smile. And knowing that he's in good health makes me smile. Alratos.

-Jordan

From The Beat: What are your plans for you and your young family? What will you do to make it possible for your son to avoid the problems that have led you to the hall?

What Makes Me Smile

Being alive,
cold air at night,
sunny days at the beach,
that's right.
Listening to my favorite CD on a cruise,
BBQ with endless food –
sounds like a perfect Sunday to me.
What about you?

-Brett

From The Beat: Yeah, sounds pretty good to us, too.

Mom And My Smile

What makes me smile is when I get a visit from my mom. It doesn't matter how I'm feeling. I could be mad, sad, or angry, but I could still put on a smile when I see my mom. She always supports me, in good times and bad. She never judges me on what I do. It could be good or bad, but she guides me on that situation. So that's why she always puts that smile on my face. I really love her for who she is and what she does for me. I always give thanks for that.

-C

From The Beat: You're a lucky guy.

Smile

A smile is something they can't take away from this G, even if they try. They can't, because it's me who is running the street. People judge me but they can't stop me. I got a haina who is down and firme. There are people trying to mess with me, but one thing I can say: only God can judge me.

-B Boy

From The Beat: OK, so imagine that you are God. If you were God, what would you say about that fellow on Planet Earth who goes by the nickname of B Boy? As you know, his current address is Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall. What would you say? We'd really like to know.

What Puts A Smile On My Face

Every day I talk to my girl puts a smile on my face.

And this one other smile will never fade away. It's when my mom comes to visit me and when she goes to my court dates to give me support.

Anything might give me a smile, especially if it's my loved ones. Right now I have a frown on my face. I hope I can put the smile back on, knowing I have made it through all this.

-Kevin

From The Beat: This past year you've been like a yo-yo. In and out, in and out, etc. Time to get serious about your life. The kind of seriousness we have in mind will make a lifetime of smiles possible for you.

For Now

Doors open everywhere I walk.
River sounds touch my soul.
The shadows of the dead are calling me.
And rumors are killing me.
The masks people wear - and their eyes
waiting for me to fall – stain my heart.
I'm impatient to see the real me in the mirror,
but for now, I'm a prisoner in this cage.

-B

From The Beat: The world, as you note in your poem, is full of many things. But for every rumor, shadow, or stain, there are counterweights, like hope, friendship, kindness, and self confidence. The trick is to balance the world's bounty and to never give up.

What Makes Me Smile

What makes me smile is just thinking about being home, you know, chilling with the family. But at the moment I'm getting tried as an adult, so there's no telling what's going to happen. But whatever comes down, I'm gonna keep my head up.

All in all, I'm just staying cool by the radio, slumpin' Mac Dre. These are things that make me smile. Later.

-Anonymous

From The Beat: It would make us smile to see you talking about the changes you need to make in your life. That's the first step – an acknowledgement that you have some 'heavy duty' work to do, that you've made mistakes. Start working on your problems and you'll always be able to hold your head up.

Anything might give me a smile, especially if it's my loved ones. Right now I have a frown on my face. I hope I can put the smile back on...

When The Doors Open

When the doors open, what do I see?

I see my girlfriend crying me a river

'cause she heard a rumor

that I was a prisoner at juvenile hall.

My eyes got watery and I got this weird feeling
that whatever the rumor was, there would always
be a shadow looking down on me.

-Michael

From The Beat: A poem about a dark dream. And like all dreams, there are bits and pieces of reality mixed in with fantasies and fears. Whether dark, funny, sad, or weird, dreams should be taken with a grain of salt, because eventually, we wake up. What we do while we're awake is what really matters.

Las Pérdidas En Mi Familia

Esta es mi manera de pensar y sentir las cosas que me han pasado. He perdido unas cuantas personas de mi familia en mi vida. Cuando una persona se te muere, no se puede creer. Siempre viene la tristeza y luego el dolor. Piensas mucho en ellos, en lo bueno que fueron. Después da una inmensa falta cada vez que los recuerdas y se te viene sólo tristeza en tu corazón.

From The Beat: Sentimos muchos por esas pérdidas que has perdido. Es verdad, a todos nos duele perder a un ser querido. Siempre se extrañan y más cuando siempre han estado ahí.

The Loss In My Family

This is the way I think and feel the things I've gone through. I've lost a few members from my family in my life. When someone dies, it's hard to accept it. Sadness always comes, and then the pain. You think a lot of them, in how good they were. Later, we miss them every time you think of them, and sadness comes again in your heart.

-Varela, San Francisco

From The Beat: We are sorry for your losses. It's true. It's painful to anybody to loose a loved one. You'll always miss them and especially when they've been there for you all the time.

Mi Visabuela

Yo tuve una visabuela que era alegre pero cuando estaba un poco joven se trompezó y se calló. De la caída que tubo no pudo caminar. Entonces llego el momento que ella tenía 90 años de edad. La comida se la tenían que dar en la boca. Tampoco podía caminar, ni ver y sólo se la pasaba acostada. Luego en un tiempo se puso grave y la hija le tenía que dar todo lo que ella necesitaba.

Luego llego el día en que se murió. Yo andaba en el bosque cuando de pronto escuche la campana que sonaba en lo que iba trepando una loma. Cuando escuche los campanazos, se me vino a la mente que se había muerto.

Cuando llegue a la casa, mire un monton de gente que la estaban velando en la noche. El día siguiente fue su entierro y todos estaban muy triste porque era muy buena. Ella los aconsejaban y le gustaba estar entre familia y reunida. Lo que más le gustaba era estar chistiando en el cuarto y lo que más le gustaba era cantar cuando se levantaba en las mañanas. También le gustaba que le trajeran café con tortilla y se sentía feliz.

From The Beat: Por lo menos vivió momentos buenos en su vida aunque tubo una vida muy dura. Y sentimos mucho lo que ella ha de haber sufrido. ¿La ayudabas también? ¿La extrañas? Ahora ya debe estar descansando en paz y deseando que tú te dirijas por el buen camino. ¿Si estuviera viva y te aconsejara que no hagas las cosas que haces, lo escucharas?

My Great Grandmother

I had a great grandmother who was very happy. When she was younger, she tripped over and fell. Due to her accident, she couldn't walk right. The time for her to turned 90 came through, and we had to feed her in her mouth. At that time, she couldn't walk, and she would spend all her time in bed. Later she became very ill and her daughter had to take care of her in all her needs.

Later, the day of her death came. I was in the forest walking up a hill when I heard the bell rang. When I heard the rings, I felt her death.

When I got home, I saw a lot of people mourning her at night. The next day was her funeral and we were sad because she was a good woman. She would give us advice, would love to be all united in family. She loved to kick back in her room. What she loved the most was to sing every morning when waking up. She would also love to have coffee, tortilla and be happy.

-Daris, Alameda

From The Beat: At least she lived part of her life in harmony, even though her life was a very hard one. We are sorry for all the suffering she went through. Did you help her too? Do you miss her? She might be resting in peace and wishing you to choose the right path to walk through. If she was alive and ask you not to do the things you are doing, would you listen to her?

La Busca De Un Futuro Mejor

Cuando yo estaba pequeño e iba a la escuela, jugaba con mis amigos. Salíamos a la playa, e íbamos a mi casa a ver películas.

Cuando cumplí 12 años é migré a los Estados Unidos. Desde ahí, he buscado un mejor futuro porque antes era muy pobre. Siempre he tenido mala suerte por no andar en buenos pasos. Siempre paso encerrado toda mi vida.

Tengo fe y confío en Dios que me mande a mi país otra vez para ir a ver a mi madre, hermanos, abuelitos, primos, tíos, y todos mis amigos. Eso es lo que tengo que contar de mi vida.

From The Beat: Cada quien vive la vida que uno mismo se busca. De la manera como estas llebando tu vida, no vas a lograr una vida mejor. Lo que haras va a ser complicar más tu vida hasta que ya no tengas control sobre ella. Cuando eso pase, se te va a ser bien difícil recuperarte. Juegalo con inteligencia.

Looking For A Better Future

When I was little and I would go to school, I used to play with my friends. We would go to the beach, and go home to play movies.

When I turned 12 years old, I immigrated the US. Ever since then, I've been looking for a better future because I'm poor. I've always had bad luck for not being on good steps. I've always spent my life locked up.

I have faith in God that they will send me back to my country again and see my mother, brother, grandparents, cousins, uncles, and all my friends. This is all I have to share about my life.

-M, San Francisco

From The Beat: We live our life the way we want. The way you are guiding yours, you won't find a better one. What you are doing is to complicating it more until the time you won't have control over it. When that happens, it will be very hard for you to fix it. Play it smart!

Hay Gente Que Empujan

Hay personas que empujan hacia las esquina como tu PO. Ellos te dicen que no debes de estar en las calles donde fuistes arrestado.

A veces por algo vas donde no debes estar y despues te ves acorralado y te enfrentas otra vez en la cárcel y pasas por cortes tras cortes. Después sigues violando tu probación y metiendote en serios problemas y después no puedes salir de esos problemas.

Todo en esta vida es difícil. Hay que ser muy fuerte porque la vida sigue.

From The Beat: ¿Estas hablando por experiencia? Meterse en problemas es bien facil, pero el problema grande es salirse de ellos. Esperamos que la próxima vez recuerdes las mismas palabras que estas diciendo para evitar estos problemas.

There Are People That Push You Around

There are people that push you against the corners like your PO. They tell you that you shouldn't be on the streets where you were arrested.

Sometimes, you go where you are not supposed to go, find yourself against the walls, and as of result; you find yourself facing jail, and go through courts and more courts. Then, you keep on violating your probation, getting into more serious problems, and finding hard to get rid of those problems.

Everything in this life is hard. We have to be strong because life continues.

-Douglas, San Francisco

From The Beat: Are you speaking from experience? Getting into trouble is very easy, what's hard is getting off from them. We hope you remember the same words you've shared with us to avoid problems. Problems don't come to you, on the contrary; you look for them.



*I ask myself where
I went wrong
I guess I was
weak when I should
have been strong*

We've got a tremendously talented writer and thinker to feature and we are ecstatic about it if you can't already tell. He's in touch with his spirituality like many people who are incarcerated. However, he's in touch with it without forcing it upon others. He basically speaks with the air that this works for me, but do whatever works for you, just do something. He starts off with a poem titled, "Wasted Time," that we're sure everyone can relate to, incarcerated or not. Then he goes into a piece about how dangerous drugs are and even goes as far to say that drugs play a part in 95% of the crimes that are committed by people who are where he is. And whether he's right or wrong, or whether it's indirectly or directly, we can't deny the fact that drugs are extremely self-destructive and can tear apart whole communities. He then closes with a poem titled, "Quiet Time," which is about having the time to take himself out of a situation and really sit with his thoughts and emotions. He is grateful is some way for the time he's been given to practice introspection and even though it had to come under some cruel circumstances, he's still thankful. We appreciate that kind of positive thinking because we don't know if we could be that strong if given the opportunity. He's writing from a Texas Correctional Facility in Snyder, Texas. We are grateful for your words...

Drugs

Once of the societies biggest problems today is drug abuse. Drugs are putting our children either on the streets or giving them a lifetime in prison! For many of those in the system on the street or giving them a lifetime in this man made hell hole, "That we call prison." For many of those in the system on charges other than drugs, they cannot deny that drugs or alcohol were a contributing factor that led to their incarceration.

They have either stolen something to get money to get high or hurt someone because of money owed for dope. I can honestly say that I believe that as many as 95% of the incarcerated are here because of drugs.

A murderer takes a life, a rapist violates the body, and a thief takes nothing that cannot be replaced. However the dope dealer not only enslaves the body and soul, he robs the mind of any reason and the heart of all hope. The dope dealer condemns men, women, and children of their dreams, ambitions, and capabilities to a living death. His crime cannot be measured individually, the effects of dope radiate outward, and its fallout of despair and degradation touches even the lives of those far removed for its evil explosion. Real dope dealers are never addicts themselves for they know all too well the ways that marijuana, crack, heroin, and any other drug can crush the spirit and destroy the mind! I sense that there are a few who are saying, "My issues involve alcohol, and alcohol is not a drug."

You are both right and wrong, although alcohol is a spirit, it is also a drug, a very addictive drug. It is also a substance that destroys our spirit and drives out the Holy Spirit!

Jesus is the cure to the drug problem society is faced with today! The answer is really very simple: admit to Jesus that we are powerless and our life is unmanageable without him — that we believe he is the son of the living God, and we cannot do it without his help. Dope is evil. It is a tool used by the devil and the only defense is God. To stop using drugs without the help of the lord, unfortunately, will lead to prison or death, drugs have destroyed my life. Just when I thought my life was coming to an end, Jesus stepped in, showed me different. He has shown me that if I let him fight my battle then and only then will we be victorious. Jesus has saved my life from an eternal living hell of drugs and torment of my soul. He saved me and I have faith in the lord that he will do it for anyone. Do you think you can do it on your own? Think again. Our best thinking has gotten us where we are today. Make your body a temple of God. The time is now to make a decision for Jesus.

Wasted Time

The time that I've wasted is my biggest regret,
Spent in these places I will never forget.
Just sitting and thinking about the things that I've done
The crying, the laughing, the hurt, and the fun
Now it's just me and my hard-driven guilt,
Behind a wall of emptiness I allowed to be built
I'm trapped in my body just wanting to run,
Back to my youth with its laughter and fun
But the chase is over for there's no place to hide
Everything is gone including my pride
With reality suddenly right in my face
I'm scared alone and stuck in this place
Now memories of the past flash through my head
And the pain is obvious by the tears that I shed
I ask myself where I went wrong
I guess I was weak when I should have been strong
Living for the drugs and the wings I had grown
My feelings were lost, afraid to be shown
As I look at my past it's so easy to see
The fear that I had afraid to be me
I'd pretend to be rugged so fast and so cool
When actually I was lost like a blinded fool
I'm getting too old for this tiresome game
Of acting real hard with no sense of shame
It's time that I change and get on with my life
Fulfilling my dreams with my beautiful family and wife
What my future will hold, only God knows
But the years that I've wasted are starting to show
I just live day by day, trying to make a new start
With all of the dreams I still hold deep in my heart
I hope I can make it I at least have to try
Because I've been heading toward death and I'm too young to die.

Quiet Time

Lord I know you give me this time
To become a better man;
Some quiet time to concentrate and follow your plan
Thus for my life's been wasted;
I've accomplished not a thing,
I've not obtained true good works
To set before the king.

Please mold me into someone
That you can take and use
Then let me be your servant, Lord;
No task will I refuse
I thank you for chastening me;
I know it's for my good,
And that you want the best for me
Like all good fathers would

So I snivel not for lesser time
But that you teach me day by day
And grant me peace and wisdom to
Not come back this way.

Dying In My Arms

You died in my arms,
Or did I die in yours?
As autumn leaves unfurled
above us
Clear-eyed and eager, our
touch was pure.
We dreamed the way lovers
do
Leaving footprints on a
frost-covered ground
How far we drifted no one
knows
But when the sun faded,
magic was found.
I only wanted to make you
happy
You only wanted me there
But what we wanted didn't
matter
For the cruel lessons of
life never play fair.
I lived by the sword
It cut me to the core
Precious life that I
carelessly stole
When I once had dreamt of
so much more.
I no longer walk among
the living
I've grown old, and now
I'm all-alone
I can't breathe life back,
You can't alleviate the
pain and regrets that have
grown.
And the fire that burned in
my soul,
Those memories of us are
that I'm sure
You died in my arms,
Or did I die in yours?

Interpretation

How many crimes make you a criminal?
Can one good deed make you a good citizen?
What are you if you transgress and do a bad deed?
How gray is the line between good and bad?
A phone call? A pair of handcuffs?
Silence? Asking forgiveness? Paying restitution?
Popular polls? Good attorneys? Youth?
Where there's a will there's a way
An "F" can become a "A"
Love can conquer hate
The right key can unlock the gate
The future can be brighter than the past
If only we'd give each other love, today
As if it were our last.

Dry These Tears

Hi, Jesus, it's me again
I just need someone to talk to
If you weren't too busy
I was hoping I could talk to you.
Things aren't going very well
My heart feels like it's broken in two
There's no one who can help me
That's why I'm turning to you.
I've made the worst mistakes
And I've only my life left to give
These days is the same as the next
Smiles don't come as easy as before
I keep thinking I'm too young for this
And I don't know if I can take it anymore.
If you have some advice
I could sure use a helping hand
Tomorrow may be too late
Forgive me if I don't wait around to understand.
Jesus, dry these tears, erase the years
I've eaten your bread — now pour me a glass of wine
Don't keep me buried in yesterday's thorny vines.
You gave me life, I relinquished my soul
Free reign to wander
Alone, down life's dismal road.

Just when we thought we couldn't possibly get anymore incredible poets because we've seen so many in our, now close to, thirteen year existence, this next writer goes and changes our minds. He's writing from a Florida State Prison in Coleman, Florida, and it must be scorching out there right now because he's definitely dropping some heat on us. He talks about everything from a woman dying in his arms to, our personal favorite, how hungry the streets are. And in between he talks about what's priceless and having God dry his tears. We share the hope that his tears will be dried too, but we also know like he knows in "Before," "There are tears before triumph." With a mind like his triumphing won't be difficult at all. Thank you for your insights and easy to read way of expressing them.

The Hungry Streets

Feed me — I'm hungry!
No menu's necessary, I
know what I want
I don't want Mickey D's or
super-sized fries
Hold the sodas, milk-shakes
and burritos, too
If you bring me a truck-load
of cheesy pizzas
I swear I'll just laugh at you.
I've been sizing you up
since you were born
Yet, you never notice me
But I don't care, in fact, I
love it
'Cause when the time is
right
You'll pray to God you paid
more attention
Not that it'll matter by then.
The obstacles you face — I
created them all:
Violence, poverty, drug
addiction, neglect,
And a thousand more
pitfalls I've schemed
All designed with one goal
in mind: your demise.
The steel traps are set
Keep thinking everything's
a game
I enjoy making believers
out of fools
I just need you to make a
mistake...
The jalapenos and hot
sauce are waiting for you.
Turn on your television
Let the flashy videos
hypnotize you,
Surrender to the superficial,
false gods
Don't listen to your
teachers at school
Ignore your mom's tears
and prayers
You don't need them — you
know it all;
Follow the crowd whenever
it leads
They'll bring you right to
my door.
I already got the oven
preheated at 450 degrees
Pick up that gun, sling
them drugs,
Wear that mean mug on
your face
You don't care — you're
bullet proof
Go ahead, pull the trigger...
Please, I'm hungry.

Before

Before the sun rises,
There is darkness.
Before one acquires,
There is the quest.
Before comfort,
There are tears.
Before triumph,
There's the bitterness of
failure.
Before we create,
There is but a dream...
Before the future can be
conquered
The past must be
understood.
Before my time ends,
I want to answer the
plaguing questions why.

Priceless

To mold one life
To do what's right
To hold the hand that none dare to
To sacrifice so that another dream may come true
To go where no one has gone before
To expect more.
Society doesn't set the limits, you do
There are many colors in the rainbow,
And many paths in which to travel
Ultimately, only you can choose.
To stand in the face of death
To love enough to give your last breath
To forgive despite your pain and suffering
To create something out of nothing.

Wake Up And Keep Moving

...I do see what I've done wrong. Who I've done wrong. I have never stayed out longer than 15-18 months out there. Unfortunately, I've never been married or had any children as of yet. Both things I truly look forward to! Now that I'm getting older and a third of my life is gone I see I have to change my ways. I have to stop using. Period. I stopped drinking hard alcohol in 1994 April. I got in a high-speed chase in a stolen truck. Luckily enough I was by myself. It was late and especially no one was hurt other than myself. But reality clicked and I saw drinking only led to one road. HERE! I stopped my drinking and can say I'm proud of myself and more than likely saved a lot of hurt both to myself and others by not drinking. Yes, of course I also see drugs bring/brought me down the same path but until recently I wasn't ready or willing to stop. No, I don't go thru the 12 steps and all that. I just say "NO!"

My parents are old and I can't or won't accept my stupidity of using to lead me back here and not being there for my mother or father. They're in their late 70s, early 80s and I have a date of next Nov of '08. I pray I keep that date but for the first time in my life I'm not going out with the idea of getting screwed up and all that.

I pray for all my brothers and sisters in here and out

This next writer writes from within the confines of CSP in Imperial, CA. He's put in 20 plus years and wants his family to know that he intends to make 2008 the year in which he's released and stays out. He says his family will be surprised and proud of what he's said; we certainly feel pride in his goals! Drugs were a very huge part of his life and he recently vowed to stop drinking and using drugs. We think that's a great idea if he wants to stay out and be supportive to his family. We appreciate how much he's shared with us and how honest he is.

there. All of you women and mankind alike. We need to get our shhh together, leave all this nonsense alone. This is coming from someone who's done almost all of it. They teach us we learn from our mistakes, what we see around us, and it's true! Some of us are just dumber than others and we want to see it first hand and go through it. I can say I am an idiot. If I write this and anyone learns or just the next time you're ready to do something, think. Come on folks, be you a south-sider, northerner, wood, crip, blood, asian, red power, whatever you are, step back, Think.

...So stay safe, strong. Think before you walk out those gates and take a drink, a hit, open your legs, do a shot, pick up a gun, all that. This is all I have and it's more than enough if you only heed a little part of what I've warned you of. Love your family, really go give Moms a hug, tell her you love her. She'll always be there for you. The same for Pops and your other family members. But Moms will always be there for you. As she is there for me.

STEVEN BAER

Some of us believe that we are living in hell on earth and that when we pass away that's when we'll finally be home. Now we're not saying that's what this next writer believes in, but through the suffering and pain of being taken away from freedom, sometimes all we have left is the hope that when we pass things will be better. Though the next poem is a short one as far as word count, it speaks magnificence as his words let us know that no matter what, we all have a chance to fulfill our purpose, whether here in this life, or in the next. He's writing from the Apalachee Correctional Institution in Sneads, Florida.

Redemption

Through long and cold and lonely days
And nights I've spent in prison,
I've learned that there are many ways
To die by their provision.

I miss my family so dear to me
Though my conduct was a shame,
From a day to live in infamy
Though I thought it just a game.

I never found the truth in life
Through shadowed paths of darkness,
The pain and guilt and endless strife
The way of madness hardened.

I danced with death out in the rain
And for a while it was ecstasy,
For while the drugs were in my veins
I didn't need you next to me.

I know the life of loneliness
And of life that's just a joke,
No matter how I came or went
There's no fixing what was broke.

I'm feeling cold and begin to shake
And it has come to pass,
The reaper hasn't long to wait
I leave the world at last.

The light and view is beautiful
More than I've ever known,
And then it does occur to me
That I am finally home.

*Moms will always be there for you.
As she is there for me.*

CLINTON AVALOS

We always enjoy hearing from this writer because he's the type to continue his education while he's incarcerated so that he'll be ready when he gets out. This week he hits with a must read poem and he sends it to us from San Quentin State Prison in San Quentin, CA. The "Formula For Success" according to him (and we agree) is education. We wonder why he picked that as a formula for success. Maybe it's because when we're informed we tend to make better decisions, but we don't know if that's the reason why he chose education. Well, whatever the case, it's a great poem that we think everyone who has this in their hands should read. So please, let us distract you no further and make way for a "Formula For Success."

Formula For Success

The formula for success is to stay in school.
Get an education and be cool.
It doesn't matter where you're at or where you been,
Just keep on trying again and again.
Something worth having is worth all the more;
It's what they call dreams, that's worth fighting for.
It's up to the individual the decisions we make,
Don't hold out the promise of empty gains.
Life is an investment, invest in yourself.
Wisdom and knowledge is great wealth.
It's not all or nothing. Life's not a pursuit to have fun
Deny yourself, pick up your cross and pray to the OI'
Mighty One.
Learning is fun when you put your mind to the test;
Keep your blinders on, forget the rest.
Stay focused and on track.
Fake it till you make it, do whatever it takes
Always count the cost; it's your life that's great
When it looks gloomy and hope is hard to hold onto
Remember always — You can do it!

Razor Winged Butterfly

Drifting toward peace, slipping, deeply slipping into times past or that which could be. Distant winds carry a Razor Winged Butterfly in the direction of my pillow. She hauntingly laughs as darkness swirls around her. My mind does not allow me to see her, yet I know she nears my pillow. Again, the four winds guided her to me.

Perching upon my chest, I am engaged by your fluttering metallic wings. Dazzled by your dance, I watch as you buzz around my neck; what a sight those fluttering wings.

Where have you gone? I see nothing but times...

Sacred memories appear as I lose sight of my Razor Winged Butterfly. Times lost, times forgotten, and times I would like to see. All fiction for a healthy spirit and a slowly aging body. Ah, there you are! Fluttering about my mind. It is your wings that have released the times.

Dancing into my mind, the Little One, she keeps my attention with those hypnotic razor wings... ignorant that my life force is being drained little by little, act by act. Who feels the first cut of the razor?

Little One, what do you bring me during this never-ending play? What memories shall be rendered? You task me, dancing around my thoughts. Why, why, do you appear to me in such a manner? Has not the Father of Time had his full measure of pain and suffering from this exhausted soul?

Does he seek something greater than this pound of flesh that I find myself missing? What stone have I not turned that you should return again and again to me? Have I not sought with truth and intention to find this thing called my spirit? Have I not purified that which is me?

Dance then if you must, take care that your razor wings stay from my most treasured memories. I have no need, want or desire to visit those things which cause beasts to appear. Keep true to your task, allow me to dream of what can be and not what was; this daylight I walk in has enough darkness for all the monsters of my misguided youth to walk in.

I have risen above that which they call B-96199. Master of this thing I call my spirit. Who comes to take that which is not for the taking? It may be old and gray, yet it is good and it is mine.

My biggest disappointments are my biggest and most treasured lessons. They shook me and my family, brought a town to its knees in wonderment. I caused people to lock their doors at night and to give strangers a second look, a look of mistrust. I

When this next writer first started this piece, it started out as three paragraphs and quickly turned into an epic informative. He's writing from Pleasant Valley State Prison in Coalinga, CA if you don't already know. He's an O.G. with a mesmerizing way with words and this next piece will just reaffirm that for you. We always enjoy his thoughts and we know all you readers do too, so please continue to read on.

caused mothers to cry and never gave it a second thought at the time. I was a walking beast in the daylight. Thee Mouseman, he writes, he draws, he is an artist, he has... he is, he is in a cage!

Make no mistake, the reason they are my most treasured lessons is because with the help of a few real friends I overcame, I stopped before it was too late. I am doing life, life in prison. But, I am doing life, life is not doing me. Get it?

Anyone can pass off bullshh for schooling. Sprinkle a little O.G. on it and drink to it. Young kids eat it up. Homie, pick that up... that's right... that's how we do it...

I ain't no fortune teller, I cannot tell you what is going to happen in your life if you finish school or don't ask me where you're going to be if you go to college or trade school. I'll be damned if I know where your life will take you if you do not lose your reason of thought to drugs.

If you realized you have been tripping on things that were not worth tripping on and you see "The Game" you been running on yourself and actually decided to stop, I cannot tell you what is going to happen in your life. I realized all that after I worked this thing I called "MY THING" into a life sentence in a small cage.

All the shhh I did as a kid, young man, and adult is my treasure. I treasure it because I see it for what it was. I cannot tell you about your future, but I can tell you about my past! If your flavor sounds even a little like mine, Lil Folks, you're in deeper than you can possibly imagine; hit the brakes quick! Me having the courage to let you know that is what makes it a treasure for me.

Politics, culture, society and destiny, all that is good stuff to study and trip with. But as I say, Lil Folks, y'all smarter than I was; times have changed and I am sure you realize that before you change all those things about the world that you do not like, that just ain't your flavor, you MUST change your odds at being out there and change starts with YOU! Unless you are dressed by someone else every morning, then you and you alone are responsible for your education and schooling; you are responsible for eating what makes you grow in body and spirit. If you're hearing what I'm saying from the Belly of the Beast, deep within Thee Cubed Abyss, then you have given me another treasured memory.

EDDIE BOBACK JR.

Writing from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, we give you a man who has been in and out of detention since he was a boy and was convicted of shooting an off-duty police officer and sentenced as an adult when he was 15. He hoped to do the right thing when he was released but ended up committing more crimes. He is now serving two consecutive life sentences without parole for the state of Pennsylvania. He still has pending charges in Florida, Georgia, New York, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Delaware. This is what he has to say to our young people who still have choices:

No Life To Live

I'm not glorifying my lifestyle. What I'm trying to say is all you young guys and girls have opportunities to change. I know a lot of you probably aren't trying to hear what adults are saying and, yeah, granted a lot of staff in juvenile facilities can be there to collect a check but a lot do help. I really wish someone would have told me to slow up, enjoy life. So try to make the best out of a bad situation. Yeah, life may seem real messed up, but I hope none of you end up where I'm at cause even though I'm alive my life is basically over.

I fell when I was twenty-four years old and for the rest of my life I got to stand while another man counts me five times a day. I get told when to eat, sleep, or exercise. It's no life to live.

What Will Happen At Your Funeral?

I'm 22 years young now, experienced juvenile hall, boot camp, CYA, CPS, etc. and now prison. Fortunately I have only attended two funerals in my life, both natural and elderly family loved ones. I do, however, know many who have passed. I noted that The Beat Within indicated the murder rate was so high in California and gave the statistics of ages.

Although I haven't had the suffering of having to prepare myself to cope and channel such grief, I do often ask myself and ask others, "How many people's lives have they touched? How many people would arrive to their funerals? Not merely to pay respects but to grieve and celebrate the life now gone because of the goodness of that person's heart and to grieve because they are now gone and to celebrate because of that moment in which they had that positive impact on your life that brought hope and a sense of goodness in the direction of living."

I believe once we are able to bring that one moment/experience of positivity in someone's life, we are able to truly live and find a purpose of doing so and though the murder rate is so high and we may not be able to decrease it,

This knock-out writer who's writing from Pelican Bay State Prison in Crescent City, CA, has posed a very insightful question about the topic of funerals and it's one that each of us needs to ask ourselves. How many people will come to celebrate our lives at your funeral? And what will they be saying at our funeral? But not only does he pose these questions, but while posing them, he answers them from his own perspective, which we feel is priceless. Sure, it's one thing to ask a really good question, but it takes a very wise person to provide thought out answers to those questions. We suggest you read what he's written and write something of your own on the very same topic. Let's see what you've come up with because if it's anything like Eric's, then you've touched a lot of lives!

we can learn to prepare ourselves for funerals by reflecting on how many people will show up to our own. Some might then be able to make those choices and take that time to help another find a bit of serenity and love, allowing them to have the same affect on those in their lives which in form leads to your living through the hopes/inspirations you gave another. This doesn't necessarily mean we won't fear death, but everything starts within ourselves and learning to assess the good and touch lives of others allows us to live in fulfillment and cope with the loss of those we lose along the way because no matter the circumstances, death is inevitable.

*Deliver me both fist closed back
 to where it's safe
 Where the heart rate sleeps
 so the beat keeps pace*

Deliver Me Back To The Womb

Deliver me back to the womb release my yoke of
 bondage

For enough has seen more then the score that it
 promised

The source expelled forth from within the core of the
 stomach

For as sure as a day will gorge the hoard of its vomit

Deliver me back to the womb remove the line of
 boundary

Before the seed in bloom produce a vine that winds
 around me

For upon becoming pruned into a defined high
 astounding

What right can they refuse to let me reside how they
 found me

Deliver me back to the womb what for is there to wait

When all that's already in its dormitory state

Withdraws temporarily in order to save face

For producing hereditary through purgatory traits

Replace my given stay the stem to hinder growth

Until it renders in fir it's sin within the yoke

The scope of close severity where one becomes
 provoked

The coach to help prepare me to wearily carry them both

Deliver me both fist closed back to where it's safe

Where the heart rate sleeps so the beat keeps pace

The state where all the faith it takes capacitates a spoon

The gate to validate if it emancipates too soon

DEET VANCE

Writing from Calipatria State Prison in Calipatria, CA, this next writer encompasses what The Beat is all about in his letter to us and then follows with a jaw-dropping poem. In his letter he reflects the importance of being able to read what people who've been where you are and/or people who are going where you are have to say about what they believe in and what they're going through. Then in his poem, "Deliver Me Back To The Womb," (which we thought was a great title by the way), he weaves words together to create a blanket of thought provoking ideas that will definitely provide the comfort of knowing there's a mind as beautiful as his out there. We appreciate his latest installment and have a feeling it won't be the last.

Dear: The Beat Within

Thanks for sharing my poems with the homeboys and homegirls who have shared their expressions in the newsletter. Being a writer is a gift that begins with inspiration and The Beat is the type of motivational method that "will" change someone's life. When I read this volume of The Beat, I seen homeboys and homegirls pouring all of that negative and idle energy into constructive, positive sources. That's such a beautiful refreshing thing.

In response to the La Raza article by Sleepy, speaking from an African Americans point of view is a very delicate matter of address. Sleeps precautionary relay was a very serious truth that has been ordered by very influential members of La Raza. Its obvious that the actual intent of this enactment was to send the message that if your gonna do something then make sure that you do it right.

In other words, instead of drive by shootings, shoot your target up close and face to face instead of potentially hitting a innocent bystander. However, by La Raza ordering an assault is no less of a crime then the drive-by because crime is crime. But this form of tough love is effective because there's too much risk involved to walk up face to face to someone and possibly get identified by a witness or counter attacked so essentially gun violence will cease by La Raza tough love.

American Gangsters

John Gotti
 Larry Hoover
 George W. Bush
 Tookie Williams
 These are American Gangsters
 Rebels
 Vigilantes
 Not to be glorified
 But to be acknowledged
 Not to be praised
 Just to be remembered
 To be or not to be
 Shakespeare said it best
 Gotti controlled the Gambino Crime Family
 He also provided jobs for many people who were poor
 Provided food and clothes for those who couldn't afford it
 Larry Hoover founded the Gangster Disciples in Chicago
 He also took young men out of the projects
 And put them in college dorms
 He expressed the importance of education
 Never tolerated ignorance or recklessness
 President Bush uses terrorism as a defense against
 terrorism
 He also... uh... you got me on that one
 On to the next
 Tookie Williams was a founding member of the Crips
 He also wrote several books to keep kids from
 gangbanging
 He displayed remorse for his involvement with gangs
 Changed his life and strengthened his relationship with God
 He was sent to death for a crime he didn't commit
 By the hands of an actor posing as governor
 Who spent his whole career making violent movies
 These are not just gangsters
 These are American Gangsters

What can we say about Professor Blackmind? He's been blowing our minds since he was 16 years old, in prose and poetry (and art), always putting it down with searing honesty — both his personal pain and his political observations. He is now re-emerging from a low period in his life (involving a near-deadly addiction to meth for which he asks all Beat readers and writers to suggest programs to help him when free). But — judging both from the quantity and quality of what he is sending us — his now sober thoughts are pouring out faster than he can record them. As he said in a personal letter, "The Lord has blessed me with a renewed passion for writing." Which makes us indebted to the Lord as we are to Blackmind himself, who writes feverishly from his solitary cell at the Sacramento County Jail.

When Life Was Simple

I'm twenty-two now
 Miss being a kid
 Life was so simple
 Fun things we did
 If I can go back
 To when things were good
 Before I got caught up
 Representin' the 'hood
 Before Calico slugs pierced through that vest
 Before my best homeboy got shot in the chest
 Before Mama went crazy
 And Papa got lazy
 I went through hell
 In and out of jail
 On the streets as a teen
 Gangbanging' with the team
 Sellin' packs of cream
 Getting' rich was the dream
 Never made enough
 The game was touch
 I fell off real hard
 Started sleepin' in the car
 And abandoned houses

Mama Was A Rolling Stone

I don't know Papa
 But Mama was a rolling stone
 Like that one in Indiana Jones
 Although she was battling her own demons
 She still managed to provide
 For me and my three brothers
 She wasn't the best mother
 But she always did her best
 Even after Grandma died
 We all struggled
 Grandma was the backbone
 And without her, we nearly collapsed
 But Mama picked up the pieces
 And tried to put everything back together
 It was a brave thing to do
 And tough to accomplish
 But Mama kept the stone rolling
 Through many ups and downs
 My stepfather died in prison
 My brother got Life in prison
 I'm in and out of jail
 So many things to stress over
 So many tears to be shed
 So much pain and suffering
 But through it all
 Mama was a rolling stone

Beyond These Walls: An Intro

12/29/07 — Still serving this 300-day sentence at Sacramento County Jail's RCCC Branch. I'm on 48-hour lockdown, which means I get about an hour out of my cell every two days. It's been like this for the past five months, and I still got three more to go. I know convicts got it much worse when they do SHU terms in the pen, but this is still a messed up program to do in a county jail. Sometimes I wish I would've took the 16 months with half prison sentence, just so I can maintain a healthier program. But I had several talks with some of the OGs in here, and they all agreed that being on felony probation is much easier than being on parole and having a DCD number. So I took the 300-day sentence and I still got about a hundred to go.

It's not easy. Due to my jail history and the excessive amount of Incident Reports (write-ups) I've received, I've been placed on indefinite lockdown whenever I come to jail. I'm in the Total Separation (T-SEP) Unit, sometimes known as Administrative Segregation (Ad-Seg), which consists of a one-man cell with a food port from which you are fed. You get to order your commissary and receive your mail on time. But without those two things, you're likely to lose your mind!

A lot of inmates doing this program have had nervous breakdowns and anxiety attacks. Some have even attempted suicide, and one inmate's attempt was successful. The only way to survive this program is to use your imagination and look beyond these walls.

Who The Hell Am I

Who the hell am I
 What makes me so special
 Is it the words that I speak
 The thoughts that I think
 The visions I see
 The clothes I wear
 It can't be those things
 That makes me who I am
 It's the pain that I've been through
 My life of struggle
 In and out of jail
 Always in trouble
 Shed so many tears
 Conquered so many fears
 Seen the faces of death
 Until their last breaths
 I prayed for redemption
 For the will to be brave
 My body keeps moving
 But my mind is enslaved
 My identity is mystery
 That even I can't reveal
 My heart has been petrified
 My spirit is concealed
 I still ask the question
 Who the hell am I

Crackedemic

I was born in Chicago
 Playas 2-step
 Pimps sendin' Pros
 Organized crime
 Still outta control
 D-boys pushin' overtime for dough
 14 when I robbed the corner sto'
 Can't see the future, times movin' slow
 Hustlin' and bangin' is all he knows
 Nobody in his life to teach him wrong from right
 Rage against the machine, he was born to fight
 Young black kid with no knowledge of history
 All he sees is poverty; all he feels is misery
 Never knew Martin Luther King had a dream
 And it wasn't weighing "product" on triple beams
 You never heard Dr. King say, "Bling bling"
 Why are we so obsessed with material things
 They brought crack in the '80s
 Gave crack to the ladies
 Put crack in the babies
 Let me tell you who "They" be
 The CIA and the rest of the Gov
 The black man was united, showing brotherly love
 The Gov couldn't have none of that
 So they started runnin' crack
 On the streets where the blacks and other poor people at
 They liked when we sold it
 Killed each other over it
 Did anything for it
 Nobody could ignore it
 They put it on the streets
 Then locked us up when we touched it
 A real cold plan to trap the black man
 We get deeper in the trap like quicksand
 (to be continued)

Satan's Exclusive (Part One)

Professor Blackmind (PB): Thank you for joining us here today, Mr. Satan.
 Satan (STN): Sure, but you can me Lucifer.
 PB: Okay, Lucifer. Please tell us why you agreed to do this exclusive?
 STN: I felt that the moves and the media have all given me a bad rep, and I wanted to set the record straight.
 PB: All right, so that you're saying is that God lied about you being the greatest source of Evil?
 STN: Oh, no. I'm definitely Evil. I feed off of everything bad in the world. You know — sex, drugs and endless wars. This is my food; it's like how you colored folks eat fried chicken...
 PB: That's racist and stereotypical!
 STN: (grinning) Exactly!
 PB: On to other subjects. What is your relationship with God like?
 STN: I see Him every day, but it's usually on bad terms. The Righteous One loves to fight, but He doesn't always win. I don't understand why he tries to save you worthless humans. Doesn't He know that it's too late?
 PB: I don't believe he does.
 STN: There's nothing else He can do to save you. No one can stop the inevitable.
 PB: What about Jesus?
 STN: Who?
 PB: you heard me. Jesus Christ, the Messiah.
 STN: Never hear of him.
 PB: Come on Satan. Jesus was the only man you couldn't defeat. He made you look like a fool many times.
 STN: No comment.
 PB: Remember that time when Jesus was in the wilderness. He had fasted for forty days and forty nights. He was hungry and you kept trying to tempt him, but he kept beating you down with Scriptures...
 STN: Enough, already! Jesus was a humungous thorn in my side! He was the worst thing that ever happened to me and my followers. It gives me goose bumps just to hear his name! There, are you happy now?
 PB: Back up, Man! You need a Tic Tac, for real. I know you ain't brushed your teeth in millenniums.
 STN: Watch it, Chump.
 PB: Okay. So what are your plans for when Jesus comes back?
 STN: I should fry you like that chicken you eat for asking me such a question! But instead, here's a simple answer: Recruit more leaders like President Bush. He's served me very well in these past eight years, and I'm very proud of him. We need more death and destruction.
 PB: Yeah, whatever. How do you feel about Barack Obama running for President?
 STN: Fried chicken in the White House.
 PB: You just don't quite, do you?
 STN: I gotta give it to you, though. I spent a lot of time and energy on making blacks go through lots of pain and suffering. I made it my duty to make sure blacks were poor and uneducated. I liked it when you people joined my gangs, sold my dope, and killed each other. It was actually quite amusing to see. But then Dr. Ki8ng had to put a monkey wrench in my plans with his foolish Civil Rights Movement. So I had him shot, just to make myself feel a little better.
 PB: You know what? Go to Hell, Satan!

Green Ribbon

The Ribbon	Sun
A symbol for the cause	That wakes us up
Green	Energy
The skin of Mother Earth	Way too much power
Death	Oil
What is inevitable	Burns toxic fumes
Life	Heat
Something so mystifying	Seeps through the ozone
Energy	Sun
What gives us the power	Melts the North Pole
Oil	Green
Which keeps us fueled	The end of Mother Earth
Heat	Life
That burns the coal	No longer exists
	The Ribbon
	Live Earth

The Road To Recovery

Why am I so confused? I been in Sacramento County Jail for about six months now, but I need to e in rehab. Although I don't have any dope charges, most of my charges are drug-related. That means I did those crimes so I could afford to buy some dope.

It seems like everybody's strung out on crystal meth. This drug does not discriminate. It affects all races — Black, White, Mexican, Asian, Russian, Arab, and many other nationalities. I got hooked on it when I was 15, and ever since then, my life has been going downhill. I've been so caught up, I don't even remember where the last seven years went.

Meth has taken a toll on my body as well: My teeth have rotted; my vision has weakened; my memory is limited; my lungs are damaged; and my timing is way off. I curse the devil who introduced me to meth. This addiction is a life-long battle that you will never win without God, therapy and medication. Which is why I need to be in rehab.

I have written and applied for a couple programs, but they all have fees or waiting lists longer than prison chow lines. I ain't got no money for fees, nod do I have a place to stay while I wait for them to call me on the waiting list. I need to be in rehab. as soon as I'm released from this jail relapse is inevitable for a homeless recovering addict.

This is why I'm so confused. If any Beat staff or BWO contributors have any helpful information, please put it in The Beat, and I'll read it.

Non-Existence

I'm spooked
 Scared of my own shadow
 Frightened of the past
 And what lies in the future
 The addiction killed me
 My soul was dead
 A non-existence
 You can see my hate
 In the darkness of my eyes
 The pain I've breathed
 Dreams crushed with every beer can
 Watered-down blood in my veins
 Even Jesus has forsaken me
 For I am not worthy
 My heart is filled with mud
 My mind wrapped in cellophane
 My spirit emancipated
 Where do I go
 With all the chaos of the world
 I prayed for instant death
 But in return I am given life
 Am I merely possessed
 By the last soul in the mirror
 Will I die not knowing the truth
 That I really existed all along

Obama 2008

Can you believe it? It's only 2008, and we already go a major African-American presidential candidate. Even better, it really looks like he has a very good chance of winning. Twenty years ago, people would have laughed in your face if you would have told them that the future top Democratic presidential candidates would be a black man and a woman. Ha!

Isn't it funny how things change? Senator Barack Obama (who is from my home state, Illinois) is an intelligent and fairly decent politician. I'm not gonna lie and say I agree with all his policies, but he is very much on the right track. As a black man, I feel that I am obligated to vote for him (sorry Al Sharpton), but his intellect and professionalism makes it a much easier decision. There have been black presidential candidates (Jesse Jackson in the '80s and Rev. Al Sharpton in 2007), but neither of those candidates were taken serious like Senator Obama.

People of all nationalities have embraced him and support him not only as a good politician, but also as a good person. Obama's campaign is themed "Change 2008". He's even got Oprah Winfrey going out of her way to co-sign for him, because she truly believes that he's just what the nation needs, a great leader who just happens to be black.

I think "change" is very appropriate for this year's election because if Obama doesn't win (I hope he does), then most likely Senator Hillary Clinton will end up becoming the first female President, and that'll be a nice start. But I choose Barack Obama.

Clinton vs. Obama

Bush will soon be history	Senator Obama
There will soon be a change	Oprah's first-round draft pick
Who do you want to lead our nation?	The People's champ
Barack Obama?	Mr. Intellectual
Hillary Clinton?	Nothing wrong with that
Rudy Giuliani?	More Brothas in the White House
Mitt Romney?	Senator Clinton
We need a change	First Lady with ambition
White woman or black man?	New York's Monarch
No New York mayors	Mrs. Two-For-One
No Mormon Republicans	More Women empowerment
That's old news	Two tough candidates
	Who will you choose?
	Let's go Obama!

Commissary Day

Everybody pay attention
 Be kind to your fellow man
 Share your blessings with others
 Stop feeding your friends
 Who are already fed
 Try sharing with someone
 Who will appreciate it
 Someone who ain't got money
 For commissary
 Someone who is not as fortunate
 As you are
 You should try it
 Set a couple packs of noodles
 And something sweet to the side
 And bless somebody
 Who ain't got nothing
 See the look of appreciation on their face
 It makes you feel good
 And it gives people hope
 So don't be afraid to share your blessings
 Because they always come back
 God bless you and happy holidays

To Disguise The Creature

It hurts so bad
 This pain in my heart
 The guilt and the shame
 Is ripping me apart
 I am not who I appear to be
 I'm so much weaker
 I put this mask on my face
 To disguise the creature
 I have so many flaws
 I'm far from perfection
 You can see the real me
 With very close inspection
 all my insecurities
 And everything I fear
 My tendency to be paranoid
 And watching the rear
 The tears I shed for everything
 That I don't understand
 And when I cry I feel ashamed
 For being less than a man
 As I endure this pain in my heart
 I feel as if I'm damned
 I tried so hard to change
 But this is who I am

Through The Haze

Lord
 Forgive me for my evil ways
 Can't see clearly through the haze
 So much hurt inside my soul
 All the hate that it must hold
 Always wanted to be brave
 Played the Devil's wicked slave
 Raped of life as a child
 Ignorant and runnin' wild
 Papa dead and Mama gone
 Grandma left me all alone
 In this world with no one to love
 Drugs, violence and all the above
 Lady Crystal became my wife
 They caught my brother and gave him LIFE
 The only ones I can depend
 Are dead, gone, or in the pen
 I'm trapped by addiction, this deadly fight
 So easy to do wrong, so hard to do right
 I'm locked up, but it's still not over
 The mind works best when sober
 As God forgives my wicked ways
 I can see so clearly through the haze

Try sharing with someone

Who will appreciate it

Someone who ain't got money

Another Flashback

Dropped out of High School
 Always played the fool
 Playin' tricks on myself
 Drugs bad for my health
 Full time hustlin'
 Can't tell me nothin'
 Stone cold way of life
 By the gun
 Or by the knife
 Even knew wrong from right
 Never been afraid to fight
 Always been afraid to cry
 Secretly afraid to die
 Mama told me every day
 Gang bangin' ain't the way
 Duck and dodgin'
 Rounds of lead
 Too slow, took one to the head
 In the hospital cuffed to the bed
 Under arrest, that's what they said
 Lucky me, only a graze
 The lifestyle is more than a phase
 On my way to Juvi Hall
 Close my eyes to escape it all
 (to be continued)

I'm trapped by addiction,

this deadly fight

So easy to do wrong, so

hard to do right

Satan's Exclusive, Part Two

Professor Blackmind (PB): Thanks again for joining us today, Lucifer.

Satan (STN): I don't like you, so call me Satan.

PB: The feeling's mutual, Devil.

STN: You better watch your mouth, punk.

PB: Anyway, last time you were here, we talked about your relationship with God. Has anything changed?

STN: Not much. We're both making plans for the 2008 elections. He's pushing for Barack Obama; I'm behind Rudy Giuliani. I'm sure that Rudy will keep the war going and work for me. It pains me that Obama has no intentions of causing death and destruction. What a wuss! God always supports the wuss.

PB: Jesus was not a wuss.

STN: Don't you ever say his name in my presence.

PB: You still a Jesus-aphobe, huh?

STN: When you die and go to hell, I'm going to give you lots of special attention.

PB: Sorry Luci, I'm straight.

STN: You foul-mouthed fool!

PB: Man, calm down. On to my next question. In the movies, they make you look like Hellboy, flaming red with horns and a pitchfork. Is this an accurate description?

STN: Of course not! I am not flaming red. I'm not red at all. In the light, I have a dark burgundy glow, but in the dark, I appear to be midnight black. I don't have any silly horns. I have tusks that come out of my forehead. Pitchfork? I've never even seen a pitchfork before.

PB: Do you have any control over people's minds?

STN: Absolutely not. Both me and God have agreed that it's best to let people think, speak and act for themselves. We persuade them, not control them. The choice they make is up to them.

PB: But what about when people go through exorcisms to get the demons out of them?

STN: That has nothing to do with the mind. My demons attack the soul and spirit, not the mind. Those two things are very fragile, but are stronger than the mind. The mind can be changed, but the soul cannot.

PB: You might be an evil bastard, but you're making some sense with this.

STN: I hate to expose game, but the best way to keep me away is to keep your soul in God's possession and your spirit free. If I see any weaknesses, I will attack. And I'm in it to win it.

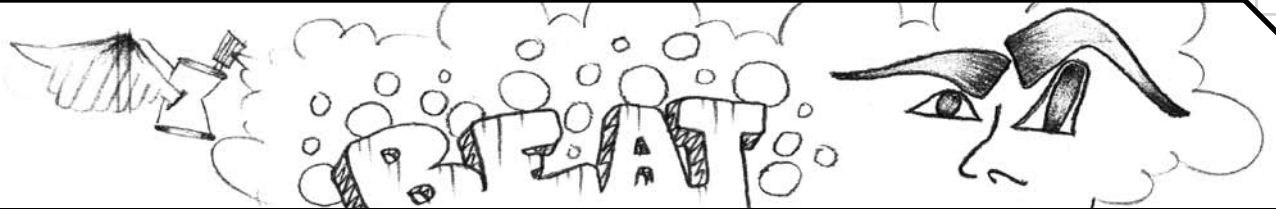
PB: I gotta expose game, too. Your breath smells like a 5,000 year old egg. You need to open up a whole can of Altoids, dump them all in your mouth and chew.

STN: How dare you insult me!

PB: Man, you're insulting yourself by doing an interview, talking the foulest breath in history. I know you're the King of Fire, but I didn't know your breath was gonna be this hot. In fact, it stinks so bad that I'm cutting this interview short. Here's some Winterfresh. Suck on it before you chew it, so it can refresh that tongue.

STN: Some day I will get you.

PB: Yeah, whatever. Go to Hell, Satan!



Iowa

History in the making
 Iowa
 Two and a half percent Black
 Cast their votes
 To elect a Black President
 Obama
 They believe in change
 He has the skills to make it happen
 Twenty-eight percent
 Believe in him
 Second place
 John Edwards
 No one knows how he did it
 Hillary Clinton has the most money
 How did she come in third place
 Twenty-nine percent
 Where did she go wrong
 She's leading on the national polls
 But she lost to a Black man
 In the most white state in America
 She and Edwards better watch out
 Obama might take New Hampshire
 He might even get South Carolina
 It'll be all over from there
 Thanks to Iowa

Horse Without A Carriage

Lookin' for a hit
 Searchin' for my next fix
 Stuck in my neck
 The blood drips
 Only spot the needle sticks
 Try to stop
 And get sick
 Cold turkey
 So vicious
 The lord is my witness
 Tried and tried to quit this
 No way off this deadly horse
 This drug will take its deadly course
 Can't be trusted
 Friends disgusted
 Family discussed it
 Got me busted
 Down to the County Jail
 Cold turkey in a cell
 Going through living hell
 For the sake of getting well

[Dedicated to my good friend Space Cowboy. I send my love and prayers out to you, Homie. Stay strong. Get well.]

There Would Have Been More Of Us

On Thursday, September 20, 2007, Americans assembled in Jena, Louisiana for a peaceful march for justice. They were from different backgrounds, different states, and different professions. They were also of different nationalities, but they came together for a common cause.

The town was expecting trouble, and it did my heart good to see that they were disappointed. No one threw a bottle, unless it was thrown in the garbage. No one fought, unless they were fighting the heat. And the only reason the police were needed was to keep the marchers safe as they crossed the streets.

Such a peaceful protest is reminiscent of the Civil Rights marches during the 1960s. This was the first Civil Rights March of the New Millennium and Martin Luther King III was there, just as his father, the late Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., would have been.

The case of the six young African American teenagers being held on felony charges to what amounts to a school fight has gotten the attention of everyone. And it has put Jena, Louisiana on the map in the worst possible way. But as one speaker said, this is not about justice for a town of 3,000 people. It is about justice for a city of 30,000, 300,000, or 3,000,000 people. And although it began in Jena, it can't end in Jena.

The crowd of marchers was conservatively estimated at about 50,000, but I would be willing to bet there were more. There was representation from all age groups, including college students. But then, we know how folks play with numbers. Had it turned into something ugly, the crowd would have been estimated at half a million black folks converging on a little ole southern town wreaking havoc. But that didn't happen. Instead they had a strategy and put it into play. I was also happy to see on the TV that although many of the stores were closed for the day, the marchers had already agreed not to spend any money there. And of course, some of Jena's white citizens took part in the march. They wanted everyone to know that everyone in the town doesn't think alike.

While watching the coverage of the peaceful demonstration, one person carried a sign that summed up the need and the reason for the march. The sign simply said, "There would have been more of us here, but so many of us are in jail."

Writing from Florida State Prison in Raiford, Florida, we bring you this Beat Without household name. We say he's a household name because he was probably our most consistent writer last year. And he starts this year off with a bang as he releases even more heat than we're used to. We really enjoyed his piece, "Things That Every Man Should Tell His Daughter," because we know there are many fathers out there who have gone through this stress and there are those who are stressing because they haven't gone through it yet. We know men can be cruel so when a father has to explain that to his daughter, we usually are speaking from the experience of having someone else's daughter done dirty. His mind is one that can put itself in a situation, empathize with it, and come up with some great conclusions on the other end. We appreciate that... Thank you...

Music

I love music. Anything with a pleasant beat and the words that follow the melody and tune, I'll listen to it. But I prefer to listen to what I love most, and that's R & B, Jazz and Blues. From R. Kelley, Joe, Tyrese, Ginuwine, Usher, Alicia Keys, Keith Sweat, Erykah Badu, Gerald Levert, India Arie, Music Soulchild, Lauryn Hill, Mary J. Blige, and anything else from the 80's and early 90's.

That's when music was music. The words were true and the feelings were real. There's also Silk, Shai, H-Town, Jodeci, Hi-Five, Soul for Real, Mint Condition, Toni Toni Tone, and I go back in the days. I feel Luther Vandross (RIP), Teddy P, Marvin Gaye, Maze and Frankie Beverly, Freddie Jackson, Temptation, Anita Baker, Patti Labelle, Betty Wright and Barry White. When I did something wrong, like messed over my girl and got caught, I'd feel guilty and listen to my blues - B. B. King, Marvin and Blue Notes, Johnny "Guitar" Watson. And when I'm stressed out I listen to the gospel, Kirk Franklin, Bebe and Cece Winan, Yolanda Adams. I listen to the best Jazz in the world, Kenny G. and Miles Davis.

I think people should have music to fit their mood. I listen to some rap but it's not my main thing. I listen to 2Pac, Scarface, 8-Ball, DMX, Ludacris, Missy Elliott, Outkast, Trick Daddy, Goodie Mob, Big-Small. I remember watching the Soul Train Show late night. It used to give me a different outlook on the old school music. I know some more old school. I just can't remember the names. Not only is music a form of therapy for me. It's also a class, in which I try to learn or see what the artist was feeling and how the artist came to write that song. Music isn't hard to understand or relate to. It's all about wanting to understand it, feel it and capture it. Music is a form of therapy that everyone knows about but many refuse to try out.

The Role Of The Father In The Home

Let's get one thing understood up front. That old "who wears the pants in the family" thing is old and doesn't work. I tend to lean more towards the philosophy of comedian Bill Cosby. Cosby said he's not the boss in his house and explains why. He said he doesn't know how he lost it or where he lost it. He also said he doesn't think he ever had it. He finished by saying he's seen the boss's job and he doesn't want it. I concur. The father's role in the home is more of a supporting role than king. He's respected as an authority figure, but when permission is needed to do something or go somewhere, those issues are always deferred to mom.

Fathers are more cerebral. They are the thinkers. They are the ones who plot to find ways to get out of doing things so someone else will have to do it. They are also excellent planners. Fathers can be leaders and followers. In the role as leaders, they are expected to guide their sons along the masculine path and teach them the male virtues that make them strong and mature. It's true that girls mature faster than boys, but because of the obvious physical difference, fathers

are called upon when it's time to do lifting or other acts that require them to flex their muscles. Lately, fathers have been blamed for not being mentors to their sons. They bear the brunt of the blame for their sons turning out to be violent criminals or drug dealers. They have also been pointed out as not being emotional or psychological supporters inside the home.

During the era of the fathers being the "bread winners," mothers were expected to be the disciplinarians. Fathers were viewed as the example setters on how to support and take care of your family. They were supposed to be the shining examples of how a man handles his responsibilities.

Fathers have evolved through the years, and although some have regressed in their responsibilities, the fact remains they are still depicted as leaders and a pillar of strength. Daughters cling closer to their fathers, and sons fear their wrath. No matter where your father is, seek him out and interact. Talk to him and share your experiences and thoughts. Make him also share his with you. Get to know your father all over again. You might be surprised what you discover.

Things That Every Man Should Tell His Daughter

When men are running the streets, hopping from bed to bed, chasing skirts, breaking hearts and attempting to procure intimate relations with numerous members of the opposite sex, very few, if any, stop to reflect on being victimized by Karma. They have no idea that the lies, the broken promises, the blatant infidelity, the emotional and physical abuse they inflict will come back to haunt them in some form or fashion. To those unfamiliar with the term Karma, it is the Hindu and Buddhist principle that suggests that man determines his future by the actions of his present life. Among Christians, it's more commonly recognized in the metaphorical context of reaping what one sows. Personally, I've always viewed it as the universe's clever way of policing our behavior by allowing our own deeds to ultimately decide whether pain or pleasure will dominate our destiny.

I bring this up because as a man who once lived his life in a manner similar to that mentioned earlier, I feel a day of reckoning slowly approaching. Having a young daughter on the precipice of teenage and young adulthood sends chills down my spine as I think of the cads waiting to administer the same treatment on her that I perpetrated on the daughters of other men.

In an effort to redeem myself of these past indiscretions and to prevent my daughter from paying for my mistakes, I've decided to help women turn the tables in their favor by offering seven things I would tell my own child if she were searching for a suitable mate. Fellas, I'm sorry, but my baby's happiness is at stake.

Keep Us On Our Toes

Never, never, ever let a man know that he completely satisfies you. We love to conquer and the minute we realize we've got you hooked, our instincts automatically lead us to our next challenge. The harder we have to work to please you, the longer we'll stick around to achieve our goal.

Appear Weak Even When You Are Strong

This is one of the 48 laws of power, but it should also help you. Most men are suckers for women they deem extremely delicate. Being with a woman who comes across as meek appeals to our nature role of protector. It forces us to feel responsible for your well-being.

Caution in Taking Advice

Anyone can give advice, but some people do so only in their own interest. Be careful when somebody offers you advice. Find out first what his or her interest is in the matter, because you can be sure that he or she is thinking primarily of self. Why should he or she come out on top instead of you? They will assure you that things look good, and then stand back to watch what happens to you.

Don't ask advice of anyone who doesn't trust you, and don't give advice to anyone who is jealous of you.

Don't ask a coward for advice about fighting, a buyer about selling, a stingy person about gratitude, a cruel person about kindness, a lazy person about work. Pay no attention to any advice they may give. Instead, rely on someone who is rightful and wise, someone who is sympathetic with you, who will be sorry to see you fall. And trust your own judgment. No one's advice is more reliable. Sometimes your own intuition can tell you more than seven wise men. Above all, pray to God that He will show you the right thing to do.

Don't Waste Your Time

If you're with a man for more than four months and he hasn't introduced or made plans to introduce you to his mother, you're not a serious candidate in his eyes. If you're serious about settling down, this guy will just hold you back from your mission.

Avoid Becoming A Homeless Shelter

If you meet a man and within a couple of weeks he attempts to start moving in with you, get ready to turn your home into a bum refuge. This guy is probably unstable and doesn't have a place of his own. He's using you to come up. Relationships that begin like that almost always end in disaster. Cut the bait as quick as possible.

Romance Without Finance Is A Nuisance

There is only one thing men love more than sex and that's money. A woman with a mind for finance is equivalent to Halle Berry in our book. If you can bring this to the table, your stock increases ten-fold.

Beware Of The Jackleg Preacher

Most people who are serious about their faith don't wear their beliefs on their sleeves. If you meet a man who immediately wants to talk about Bible scriptures, there is a 90% chance he's faking. Some men use the Bible to persuade woman to let their guard down. It's the oldest game to play. Don't be fooled by the clean-cut and eloquent speech. Some of those tongues should be forked.

Keep Your Goodies On Ice

Your mother was right. Don't be so hot in the pants. Men cherish things that they work hard to get. We want to feel safe in the knowledge that we're not becoming involved with the local "merry-go-round." Sure, we'll come back if you blow our minds on the first night, but we'll never respect you and we'll always think of you as an easy prey. The longer we wait, the more we value the reward. Save your best tricks for the honeymoon.

They call it the game of love for a reason. You have to develop some sort of strategy in order to win. Take control of your life. Change your style. And don't just wait to exhale... breathe!

Having a young daughter on the precipice of teenage and young adulthood sends chills down my spine...

Thought Process

(Dedicated to the powerful girls in Juvenile Hall)

Anyone who values learning should be able to help others by what he himself says and writes. That is why I write, to share my wisdom and learning and love with you. Let me urge you, then, to read this knowledge carefully and with an open mind. And please be patient in those places where, in spite of all my diligent efforts, I may not have worded some phrases very well.

Heaven's Grocery Store

I was walking down life's highway a long time ago
 When one day I saw a sign that read "Heaven's Grocery Store"

As I got a little closer the door came open wide
 And when I came to myself I was standing inside
 I saw a host of angels, they were standing everywhere
 One handed me a basket and said, "My child, shop with care"

Everything a Christian needed was in that grocery store
 And all you couldn't carry you could come back the next day for more

First I got some patience, love was in the same row
 Further down was understanding, you need that everywhere you go

I got a box or two of wisdom, a bag or two of faith
 I just couldn't miss the Holy Ghost, for it was all over the place

I stopped to get some strength and courage to help me run this race

By then my basket was getting full
 But I remembered I needed some grace

I didn't forget salvation, for salvation was free
 So I tried to get enough of that to save both you and me
 Then I started up to the counter to pay my grocery bill
 For I thought I had everything to do the master's will
 As I went up the aisle I saw prayer and I just had to put that in

For I know when I stepped outside I would run right into sin

Peace and joy were plentiful, they were on the last shelf
 Song and praise were hanging near, so I just helped myself

Then I said to the angel, "Now how much do I owe?"
 He smiled and said, "Just take them everywhere you go"
 Again I smiled at him and said, "How much now do I really owe?"

He smiled again and said, "My Child, Jesus paid your bill a long time ago"

The Word Of God

People spend their lives searching for answers, for contentment that contains something that's missing from their life that would make it complete. They go from one thing to another in succession trying to obtain this, yet still they find only a restlessness inside themselves, something unfulfilled. Money, success, notoriety, sex, drugs, love, the list goes on and on but always it seems that whatever we want or the feelings we need are just out of our grasp.

I know. I've tried these "lesser gods" most of my life. In all my searching I never trusted God with all my heart. I guess a person must go through a certain amount of pain and hopelessness before he realizes it's going to take someone much greater to help him. I think it's at this point, when all of your pride is played out, that He finds you.

I had a misconception early on in life that in order for God to take notice of you, you had to be almost perfect. But you never know just how hard it is to be "good" until you have given it your best try. I failed miserably. God know this when Christ was on earth. He even said He came to save the lost, not the righteous. He hung out with the sinners and tax collectors and was condemned by the religious.

The Bible says that we hear God through a still small voice and I still believe you can. It's just that we are turned into other things such as jobs, chasing that high, that God's voice becomes a static noise in the background.

But once you turn your attention towards Him and you see His power at work, it's a very humbling event in your life. He's in the smile of that lady that expresses her thankfulness that God heard her prayers that her son would come home from Iraq. He's in the laughter of a little boy at Christmas when he finds a present under the tree from his daddy who's been in prison the past year. It's the glow in the young mother's face when she is able to be home with her children on their birthday instead of still in bondage to addiction and in Rehab.

You see, I've had people argue with me over and about God, but when you look at their lifestyle, it just doesn't add up. Because once you really have found God and come into the presence of the Almighty and get a glimpse of eternity, He enters into you and there is no way you couldn't be transformed. This is the God I need. This is the God I want, and none other after all these years. This is the God I have.

Further down was understanding, you need that everywhere you go

It Is What It Is!

Jena 6 is about the hurricane-ravished state of Louisiana. It is about a small town there called Jena. Jena 6 is about a tree. It is about three hangman's nooses. It is about children, both black and white. But most importantly it is about race and racism.

Say what you want. Call it whatever you want, but when the bottom line is drawn, it is what it is, and that is racism. It is a good example that some white people need to grow up. They need to know that white people no longer own America, and that black people are here to stay. They are going to stay in the America that they helped to build, and they are not going to stay here living on their knees or being second-class citizens.

In Jena, a black youngster got beat up by a group of white kids for merely sitting under a tree on the school campus. It was dismissed as being a case of children being children. When a group of black youngsters got revenge and beat up a white youngster, it was not mere child's play

but a felony offense that called for six black youngsters being arrested, and one of them being charged as an adult. Even the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan recognizes this as blatant racism. I am not playing the race card, people. The card is playing itself, because what happened in Jena is what it is! Racism in the first degree.

It is more of a direct reflection on the adults in Jena than it is on the children of this town. It shows the kind of role models this town has, and it shows where the children got their racist attitudes. That little town is scarred for life. It will always be remembered for the injustice in the Jena 6 case. The prosecutor in this case says it has never been about race. Excuse me sir! But who are you talking to? Black folks have been off the tomato truck for a very long time. You may not know, but blacks know racism when they see it.

Jena, clean up your act. Undo your wrong. Apologize to the world and especially black people. Then fall on your knees and pray to the Lord to make you whole once again.

Meth has taken a toll on my body as well: My teeth have rotted; my vision has weakened; my memory is limited; my lungs are damaged; and my timing is way off. I curse the devil who introduced me to meth. This addiction is a life-long battle that you will never win without God, therapy and medication. Which is why I need to be in rehab.

read the rest of Professor Blackmind's BWO piece on page 50

